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AN ESSAY

ON

MORAL FREEDOM, &c.

AN ESSAY
ON
MORAL FREEDOM:
TO WHICH IS ATTACHED,
A REVIEW OF THE PRINCIPLES OF
DR. WHITBY AND PRESIDENT EDWARDS
ON
FREE WILL;
AND OF
DR. BROWN'S THEORY
OF
CAUSATION AND AGENCY.

BY THE
REV. THOMAS TULLY CRYBBACE, A. M.
AUTHOR OF "AN ESSAY ON THE EXTENT OF HUMAN AND DIVINE AGENCY
IN THE PRODUCTION OF SAVING FAITH."

Omnis vera materies a rebus ipsis petenda est.
BACON.

EDINBURGH:
WAUGH AND INNES.

M. OGLE, GLASGOW; W. CURRY, JUN. & CO. DUBLIN; JAMES DUNCAN,
AND WHITTAKER, TREACHER & ARNOT, LONDON.

M.DCCC.XXIX.

THE HISTORY OF THE

ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH

FROM 1783 TO 1843

BY JAMES H. BURNES

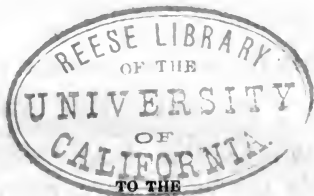
ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

THE FIRST VOLUME. 1783-1820.

25121

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY A. BALFOUR & CO. HIGH STREET.



REV. THOMAS CHALMERS, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF EDINBURGH.

REVEREND SIR,

IN having the honour to inscribe to you the following Essay, I will not distress you with the impertinence of admiration and eulogy. "By the grace of God I am what I am," is not more the principle of your theology than the sentiment of your heart; and while the sentiment suppresses all seeking of honour from men on the one hand, the principle should surely check all tendency to hold men's persons in admiration on the other, and awaken rather a sympathetic feeling of gratitude to Him who, as the God of nature or of grace, is the author of all that is excellent and admirable in human character.

Of the leading principles of the present Essay, you formerly did me the honour to express your approbation ; and, since that time, I have had a public opportunity of perceiving more fully how exactly the views here given coincide with your own, so far as you deemed it necessary to examine the subject.

Of the importance of the inquiry it is needless to say any thing. “ The question about free will,” says Dugald Stewart, “ has furnished, in all ages and countries, inexhaustible matter of contention both to philosophers and divines. In the ancient schools of Greece, it is well known how generally and keenly it was agitated. Among the Mahometans, it constitutes one of the principal points of division between the followers of Omar and those of Ali ; and among the ancient Jews, it was the subject of endless dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees. It is scarcely necessary for me to add what violent controversies it has produced, and still continues to produce, in the Christian world.”*

And it is not as a matter of curious speculation, that this subject has so deeply engaged the attention of men of all ages, sects, and countries.

* Stewart’s Intellectual and Active Powers, Vol. II. App. I.

It lies at the foundation of moral obligation, and hence of all religion, natural and revealed. To the Christian, in particular, the subject of liberty must ever be peculiarly interesting. Notwithstanding all the laborious efforts to establish universal necessity, he knows, on the highest evidence, that there is indeed a liberty with which the Divine Redeemer makes his people free ; but how can this be understood without knowing the nature of the being who enjoys it ? Ignorance of the human constitution, and its present condition, is the principal cause of the endless controversies among Christians. Did man know himself, the feelings of humility, of faith, and of gratitude would quickly supersede the rancorous passions of the disputant. And perhaps there is not a subject in the whole compass of theology, whose explication would so directly and completely remove so many grounds of difference among inquiring Christians as that of liberty and necessity. Were this subject fully illustrated, it might be considered one of the most hopeful tokens that the period was at hand, when the watchmen shall see eye to eye, and when with the voice together they shall sing ; and the Christian church shall at length be

delivered from that wisdom, earthly, brutal and devilish, which has led the ministers of truth to wrangle about they knew not what, while the multitudes gazing around were allowed to perish for lack of the knowledge of those truths on which they were all agreed.

Allow me then, Sir, to state briefly how far the subject of liberty has been satisfactorily explained, and at which points it still requires illustration.

Mr. Hume, President Edwards, and others have put beyond all doubt the universality of causation or philosophical necessity. Every thing has a cause, except the eternal First Cause, whose name therefore is, "I am that I am;" and every action implies an agent who has had power to perform it. So far there is no difference of opinion; but should we hence conclude the universality of any necessity opposed to freedom? Quite the reverse. This necessity, as shall be shown, is nothing but the simple fact, that agents *exist*, and proves no necessity but that which is stated in the proposition—a thing *cannot* be, and not be simultaneously. As a stone *is*, because it is solid, &c. ; so a being *is* an agent because he has power to secure the regu-

lar performance of the actions peculiar to his nature. To maintain therefore the universality of philosophical necessity, is just to affirm the fact of the existence of agents ; and accordingly, as shall be afterwards shown, while one class of philosophers have written many a huge volume to prove to mankind, that while a being *is*, he *must be* ; another class have strenuously maintained that in order to be free he must be annihilated. The dispute, as generally managed, between the necessitarian and libertarian, has truly regarded only the existence of the agent, and not the liberty or necessity of an agent who actually has a being. The necessity of the one states just the fact, *I am* ; the liberty of the other asserts, *I am not*.

To free us from all such misconceptions, we are first of all to inquire, what is an agent ; and then having settled this preliminary inquiry, and taken, as a matter of fact, the existence of the being whose condition it is required to ascertain, we are prepared to inquire further, what is the liberty of such and such an agent, and what the opposite state of necessity. The philosophical necessity is the fact of his existence as a being possessed of the power of agency ; real necessity can be nothing but a state of an agent who

already exists. By thus distinguishing philosophical and real necessity, we shall be delivered at once from a fearful host of arguments on both sides, which will be found utterly irrelevant and unmeaning; and obtain a fine illustration of the justness of the remark of Dr. Brown, that "to remove a number of cumbrous words is, in many cases, all that is necessary to render distinctly visible, as it were to our very glance, truths, which they and they only, have been for ages hiding from our view."

This true method of inquiry, indeed, was laid down by Edwards, though he did not carry it forward to its legitimate conclusions. Freedom he proved to be the enjoyment of power; necessity to be the result of weakness. The voluntary agent, for example, is free when he is able to carry his will into effect, but labours under the opposite state of real necessity, when his will is opposed and frustrated by irresistible physical force. To both these opposite states of being, it is plain, causation or philosophical necessity is equally necessary, that is, whether a being enjoy power and is free, or is weak and is oppressed by the superior power of another, the law of causation equally prevails.

Pursuing the inquiry on this just principle, Edwards and all the necessitarians admit that man is, in one sense, free when he does as he chooses, and is in the opposite state of necessity when his will is opposed and resisted. And that man, when free from all compulsion and restraint, does uniformly act according to his volitions cannot be doubted, and so far all are agreed. The question then becomes, whether this is all the liberty enjoyed by man. Hume, Edwards, &c. maintain that it is, and hold it absurd to imagine, that man should possess a higher degree of freedom than the power of doing as he chooses and finds most agreeable.

That this is the whole of *free will*, as it is usually termed, or all the liberty of the voluntary agent who regulates his actions by his volitions, Mr. Locke long since demonstrated; but that it is not all the liberty possessed by man shall afterwards appear. It is common to man with the brutes; and it is not the muscular motions consequent upon volition, but the will itself which man is required, by the law of God, to regulate; and therefore if he has the power only of determining his actions by his volitions, but not of controlling and regulating the volitions themselves,

he plainly cannot be the subject of moral obligation. This power is the proper freedom of a moral agent. As the willing animal regulates his actions, can the moral agent, in like manner, determine and regulate his volitions? It is not the question, does man act with a motive or according to the strongest, for that he does so will be found simply to state the fact, either that he is a voluntary or moral agent, according as the term motive is taken to signify the desire or the perception of an object; nor is it the question, whether man wills as he pleases, for that is an unmeaning truism;—but it is, can the thinking and intelligent being control and regulate his volitions, in the same manner as the willing animal regulates his muscular motions.

To ascertain in what this power consists, in what manner and to what extent it is enjoyed, is the object of this Essay. It is plainly a subject of the first importance to moral science as well as to theology, and is still involved in great obscurity and perplexity in the writings even of the most accurate divines and philosophers. The cause of the inexplicable confusion and endless controversy, has not been in the nature of the facts; for these are perfectly plain and have been long

universally acknowledged ; but partly in the ambiguity of terms, and principally in the present derangement of our moral constitution. Man, the animal, remains true to his nature and acts uniformly, when free from compulsion and restraint, according to his volition ; and hence the nature of animal or voluntary liberty has long been well understood : Man, the moral agent, has, in consequence of the fall, violated the law of his moral constitution, and hence the jarring and contradictory phenomena exhibited by the spirit, to use the language of the Apostle, warring against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit. It is thus, as will afterwards appear, that the Arminian defender of liberty has been frequently right in his general principle, but, overlooking the numerous exceptions to the general law, completely wrong in his practical conclusions ; while many a Calvinistic asserter of necessity has been totally mistaken with respect to the general principle, but right in the practical conclusions, which depend not on the law itself but on the exceptions. If the account of liberty, in the following pages, is clearly established, the controversial ground between the parties will be much diminished ; for it must

be confessed that the sarcastic remark of Leibnitz is not without foundation, "*Ils cherchent ce qu'ils savent et ne savent pas ce qu'ils cherchent.*"

It is not intended indeed to enter formally upon the religious bearings of the principles which shall be established, but in most cases, their application is so obvious and direct, that the reader who is at all acquainted with these subjects, will at once perceive the illustration to be derived. The consistency of the fore-ordination and prescience of God with the righteousness of his moral government, the universality of moral responsibility, the nature of the faith which justifies the moral being, the strength as well as weakness and utter helplessness of fallen man, the necessity of the direct and powerful agency of the Divine Spirit to effect his moral renovation, with a number of other important subjects, will derive much elucidation. By the investigation of this subject, indeed, we shall be enabled, on principles established by clear and acknowledged facts, as well as by the plain statements of the sacred Scriptures, to carry the torch of science along the dark and intricate history of man, from the time of his creation in the

image of God to the present moment, and exhibit, with a clear and steady light, at once the nature and responsibility of man as a moral agent, and the justice and mercy of the moral government of God. Within our own world, and during the history of the species, all is plain and satisfactory. It is only when we step without the limits of time, and beyond the range of history, and attempt, on the principles of philosophical necessity, to account for the origin of moral evil among the fallen spirits, that we are involved in mystery, and stumble on what may be well described, for such they have often proved—the dark mountains of vanity. Every one sees that we are here completely without the sphere of human knowledge; and without history and without facts, the intellect of an archangel could experience nothing but mystery and difficulty; or rather he would find no difficulty at all, for seeing that the object was beyond the sphere of knowledge, with that self-command which becomes sound philosophy, he would be content to say with the French philosopher, in reference to the same subject, “*Je n’en sçais rien.*” All the works of God which he does know, he finds right and good; and he

would not doubt that those which he knows not are right also. Within the wide sphere of our own horizon, the sun shines, the mountains, the woods and the rivers sparkle in his beams, and prove the goodness of the Creator; and there is no reason to doubt that in the regions to which our keenest optics cannot extend, the same sun illuminates other mountains, woods and rivers as clear and beautiful as our own.

Such, Sir, is the general scope of the Essay. May I now state the method on which the investigation has been conducted. On reading, several years ago, some of the best authors on both sides of the question, the opposite writers were found so contradictory, and withal seemed to contain so much truth and to urge so many plausible arguments in favour of their own views, that I felt persuaded, that a subject on which so much controversy prevailed, must not be well understood, and that it were vain to seek satisfactory information from the many books which had been written. I laid all authors aside, therefore, and resolved to study the subject for myself, by comparing the facts stated by moralists, historians and biographers, with the feelings of my own mind and the mental phenomena exhi-

bited by others in the daily intercourse of life. As in Revelation, the only inquiry is, "What readest thou?" so here the sole question has been, What feelest thou? What are the facts of consciousness? In this manner, on the strictest principles of analysis and induction, were the conclusions stated in the Essay obtained. I then felt myself prepared to examine the best books on the subject, and found, as I anticipated, that most writers present a mixture of truth and error, and no one whom I have seen gives a complete view of this interesting subject; but that they have stated all the facts, and it might not be difficult, by a selection from the writings of two authors of the opposite parties, Locke and Reid, for example, to present a full account of the whole subject of liberty and necessity, both physical and moral. Nothing new, therefore, in matter of fact, is to be expected; for, as D'Alembert has well observed, it were as absurd to claim originality in this respect, as to pretend to new doctrines in Revelation. The facts are those which daily occur, and are familiar to all; and the sole object, therefore, has been to rescue them from the chaos in which they are found, and by arranging them according to their natural

relations, to exhibit a true account of voluntary and moral agency. It requires neither the powers of inventive genius to supply the materials, nor the aid of imagination to construct theories ; for the materials are already prepared in the well known judgments, desires, and purposes of men, and are each fitted to its own place, like the stones for the temple of Solomon, which needed only to be arranged in their proper places, to form the structure. How far, Sir, I have succeeded in raising the building, others must determine ; but I know it is a glorious fabric ; for it presents a full view of the moral government of God during the history of man, and rests upon a surer and more precious foundation than the gems on which stands the new Jerusalem—the justice, the veracity, and the mercy of the Eternal. If to this temple I have finished a corner, or raised the smallest column, I will neither consider my labour in vain, nor feel presumptuous in thus claiming your attention.

But whether or not, Sir, I may have this satisfaction, I feel truly happy in having an opportunity of inscribing the Essay to you, as a small expression of my high respect and affection. Besides

the feeling with which every friend of Christianity must regard the name of Dr. Chalmers, I experience a peculiar claim on my gratitude, as it is to you, in some sort, that this Essay owes its existence; for it was a discourse of yours which, if it did not fix my resolution, gave me courage and vigour to prosecute the study of theology, in a season of great hesitation and perplexity, when without a friend but Him who is the tried and unfailing Friend of them who have no help of man at all.

THE AUTHOR.

EDINBURGH, *March* 1829.

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THE AUTHOR

London, March 1839

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* Correct Views of the Westminster Confession, Note G.

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ERRATA.

- Page 20, line 14 from top, for *very* read *every*
 — 33, line 8 from top, for *laws* read *law*
 — 50, line 11 from top, for *inquire* read *inquires*
 — 97, line 9 from top, for — read :—
 — 209, line 1 from top, for *trust* read *truth*
 — 235, line 11 from bottom, for *inconvenience* read *inconveniences*
 — 250, line 7 from bottom, for *philosopher* read *philosophers*.



INTRODUCTION.

NATURE OF CAUSATION.

THE subject of Causation is so intimately connected with that of Liberty and Necessity, or rather the one subject is so directly the basis of the other, that it may not be amiss to present a short account of it, by way of introduction to the subsequent Essay. And as one can scarcely give any account of the relation of Cause and Effect without noticing the opinions of so distinguished a writer as Dr. Brown, particularly as his arguments have not yet, so far as we have seen, been fairly and candidly met, we shall now offer some remarks on the theory which this accomplished philosopher attempted to establish.

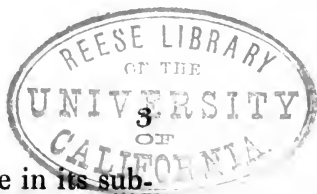
Of the dispute between Dr. Brown and Mr. Hume concerning the origin of the idea of power and causation we shall by and by be better able to form an opinion ; but before proceeding to the principal subject of inquiry, it may not be improper to determine the meaning of the terms

power, property, or quality. "The words property and quality," says Dr. Brown, "admit of exactly the same definition, expressing only a certain relation of invariable antecedence and consequence in changes which take place in the presence of the substance to which they are ascribed. They are strictly synonymous with power : or, at least, the only difference is, that property and quality, as commonly used, comprehend both the powers and susceptibilities of substances."*

The terms power and property are, in vulgar language, frequently employed indiscriminately ; but they are strictly synonymous only so far as they express the same thing, in like manner as the king of Hanover and the king of Great Britain at present mean the same person. The words refer to the same thing, but they express it in different relations ; and many affirmations therefore might be truly made respecting the one, which would be false regarding the other. The terms power and susceptibility express only, let it at present be admitted, a certain relation of invariable antecedence and consequence in changes that take place in the presence of the substance to which they are ascribed ; but it is not so with the words property and quality. A property or quality is something which is con-

* Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect, p. 18.

CAUSATION.



ceived to have a permanent existence in its subject independently of our perception of it ; and which becomes a power when considered in relation to the effects which it produces in other substances. The same thing which is a power in relation to its effects, is a property or quality when considered as inherent in a substance, and entering into the constitution of its nature. The powers of the fire or the candle which warm and enlighten us, are properties when left to burn alone in an empty chamber and when considered by us merely as existing things without reference to their effects ; and become powers only when considered as the causes of the sensations of light and heat.

All properties then, it is plain, are first known to us as powers, which again are, to a great extent, known to us only by their effects. Stretching out the hand towards a piece of matter, it resists our motion, and the power by which it does so, is termed solidity. We smell it, and it affects the olfactory nerves in a certain manner, and the power is named smell. We open our eyes upon it, and we experience the sensation of colour, and the power by which the sensation is produced is, for want of another term, called by the same name. When we consider these and all the other powers of matter as united in one subject, and existing whether we perceive them or not, we have then the idea of so many properties of body ;

and the various aggregates of properties with which we are acquainted constitute, to our conception, all the substances which are known to exist in nature.

Dr. Brown is careful to guard us against the scholastic misapprehension, that powers and properties are any thing distinct from the substances themselves to which they belong. "The powers, properties, or qualities of a substance are not to be regarded as any thing superadded to the substance or distinct from it. They are only the substance itself, considered in relation to various changes which take place when it exists in peculiar circumstances. . . . There are not substances, therefore, and also powers and qualities, but substances alone. We do not add greenness to the emerald, or yellowness to gold, or blueness to the sky, or darkness to the vapoury masses which occasionally overshadow it; but the emerald, the gold, the sky, the clouds, affect our vision in a certain manner. They are antecedents of sensations which arise in us."*

The cause of the strong tendency which is felt to consider properties as some way or other independent of their subjects, and an addition to the substances to which they belong, is apparent. Though no property can exist without a substance in which it is inherent, substances can ex-

• Ibid. p. 27.

ist without many of their properties, and are susceptible of increase and diminution in the number of the powers by which they affect our senses. When, therefore, a substance, retaining all its former powers, receives new ones and produces new effects in us, it is plain that it has received a real addition ; for it is ever to be remembered, that we are utterly ignorant of the nature of substances, except as things which affect us in a certain manner ; or, in the words of Dr. Brown, “ whatever definition we give of matter must always be the enumeration of those properties or qualities which it exhibits ; and if there were no powers, there would be truly nothing to define.” This is undoubtedly true, at least with respect to our perceptions ; and, of course, we have no reason to believe it otherwise than as it appears to us.

In maintaining however, in reference to the identity of properties with substances, that “ God, and the things which he has created, are every thing which truly exists in the universe, to which nothing can be added which is not itself a new substance,” we are evidently going beyond the limits of human knowledge, and, in avoiding the mistake of the schoolmen, are in danger of falling into an error equally unphilosophical. We know nothing of substances, and, according to Dr. Brown, nothing of powers and properties, but as the antecedents of certain consequents ;

and it were absurd, therefore, to inquire, what substances in their own nature are, or how they are endued with certain properties. Substances, we know, cannot exist, or to speak more correctly, are never, in our experience, found to exist without a number of properties, in which, therefore, we conceive their nature consists; but they do occasionally receive other properties, without any change in their essential attributes, and to our perception, obtain a real addition. We cannot say that they receive any additional substance, and though we may term them new substances if we choose, we cannot affirm that they have undergone any change which alters their nature, or destroys their identity, any more than a man who has lost an eye, or who has become a little more corpulent than usual, can be considered a different person. Were a substance, destitute of the secondary qualities of taste and smell, to be endued with these properties by the will of the Creator, we could not imagine that any new substance had been added, though certainly we should believe that it had received a real addition. What this addition is, we cannot determine, unless we should know the nature of secondary qualities, which, in the present state, are directly known to us only as powers, or the antecedents of certain sensations. We are in no danger of being misled, if we distinctly understand that powers and properties

can have no existence without a subject, though, as the powers and properties of substances, they have as real and permanent an existence as the substances themselves. A substance without powers is not less a contradiction than a property distinct from a substance. It is only by their powers that we know the existence of substances, and the existence of the one, therefore, is, to our conception, as real and permanent as the other. That a property is a property, and as such truly exists, is as true as that a substance is a substance; and by denying the existence of the former, we necessarily deny the reality of the latter, and are placed at once in the fantastic world of mere impressions and ideas. Holding then the existence of powers and properties as such, to be as real as that of substances, we now proceed to ascertain how far we understand the nature of power, or rather of powers; for perhaps much of the obscurity in which this subject has been involved, has arisen from attempting to discover in individual substances an abstract general property, called power, which, of course, has nothing but an imaginary existence.

The principle which Dr. Brown labours to establish, and by which his theory of Cause and Effect is distinguished, is that causation is nothing but an invariable sequence—a cause being a constant, uniform and invariable antecedent, and an effect the corresponding consequent.

If, in maintaining this principle, this acute philosopher has made no real improvement in the mode of philosophizing, nor freed us, as he imagined, from another of the scholastic phantoms which still haunted the imagination, and disturbed the speculations of the philosophic inquirer, he has certainly more clearly than ever pointed out the true limits of human knowledge. There are a multitude of instances in which we perceive nothing more than uniform sequence. That one thing invariably follows another is known as a matter of fact, but how or why it is, our limited faculties, judging from the particular instance, cannot discover. Were all the cases of causation of this sort, as are all the examples which Dr. Brown has brought forward and examined in support of his theory, the correctness of his account of Cause and Effect could not be called in question; but we shall presently show, that there are multitudes of cases in which more is observed than mere antecedence, and hence that his theory, being a negative conclusion resting on a partial induction, falls at once to the ground.

That an effect is a constant and invariable consequent, may be safely admitted as a convenient, if not a strictly logical definition, of effect in general. That a cause too is a constant and invariable antecedent is not to be denied, and so far Mr. Hume and Dr. Brown are correct in the statement of facts. But men will still ask, whe-

ther Dr. Brown's philosophy admits of it or not, why such and such an antecedent is uniformly followed by such a consequent? There are antecedents and consequents which have remained invariable during the whole period of our experience, and which nevertheless we have never conceived to be related as cause and effect, and how does it happen that another antecedent not more uniform is deemed a cause and its consequent an effect? We ask not what an effect is, for that is admitted to be an invariable consequent; but what is it in the antecedent which secures the uniformity of the sequence? Why is an antecedent followed by its own consequent and not by another? What, in short, is the property, usually called power, which is conceived to render the uniformity of the sequence necessary and certain?

To answer this question as far and as satisfactorily as possible, let us first examine some of the simplest and most obvious cases of cause and effect, before proceeding to those which are more complex and abstruse. And let it be remembered, that any substance which comes into being, or any change whatever which takes place in substances which already exist, is an effect. The slightest change in the most accidental mode of any substance, is an effect as truly as the chemical action of the solar rays in the process of vegetation, or as the creation of the sun itself.

It may be remarked too, that could we understand the nature of power in every case, it would be vain to expect such an identity or similarity as is found in the general properties of substances. The power of a man to move an arm, of the magnet to attract iron, of aqua regia to dissolve gold, and of a glove to cover the hand, must be so essentially different, that to give any definition of it common to them all, it is necessary to describe it in terms so general as state little more than the effect. To go systematically into the subject, it would be necessary to divide power generally into various species, according to the nature of the subjects in which it is found, and then we could more distinctly perceive in which we know its nature fully, in which partially, and in which we are altogether ignorant of it and can affirm only the fact of uniform sequence, without being able to discover the power on which the sequence depends. But at present it is not the object to attempt any systematic and minute investigation, but to offer some remarks on the subject in general.

To take examples in the mere modes of things, let us conceive that the filling up of a pit, by throwing into it a quantity of earth, is the effect whose cause is to be examined. The presence of the earth in the pit is the immediate cause of its being filled up, and it is plain, that as the absence of the earth from that place constituted the

pit, its presence in the same place must necessarily produce the effect of filling it up again. It is not the earth, as possessed merely of solidity, which produces the effect, but the solid substance, as existing in a certain place, that is the cause of this change of mode ; and there is therefore not simply the fact, that the effect follows its cause, but from the adaptation of the cause to the effect, it necessarily must follow and cannot be otherwise. It is that adaptation which constitutes the power of the cause, and on which the uniformity of the sequence depends. So long as matter retains its present nature, a certain quantity of it, in a certain place, will necessarily produce the effect in question, and it were a contradiction to suppose it otherwise. The adaptation or power of the cause inevitably secures the invariable sequence of the effect, and must secure it, unless it were possible that things could be and not be at the same instant of time.

If, again, we turn our attention to the workmen whose physical powers are employed in conveying the matter to the spot where its presence is required, we still find a similar adaptation in the cause to produce the uniform sequence. We do not here consider how the perceptions of the understanding produce volitions, or how volition gives rise to muscular motion ; but we consider muscular motion, not as an effect of volition, but as a cause, which in its turn produces effects in the

external world. Muscular motion is that by which an animal acts against the law of gravitation and overcomes its force, and by which he is able, therefore, to change the place of matter, which retains its position only by the influence of this law. A man, then, exerting his muscular force in a certain manner, must produce a certain effect; and from the adaption of the cause, that is, the muscular force employed in a certain manner, it is as contradictory to suppose it otherwise as to imagine that matter should not fill a space equal to its bulk. The earth is not more adapted to fill the pit than is the physical force of the workmen, when directed in a certain way, to convey the earth to the place where its presence produces the effect. The invariable sequence of both effects is the necessary and unavoidable result of the adaptation of the cause; and we clearly perceive, that on this adaptation they depend and must constantly and uniformly follow, without an absolute contradiction.

So it is with all the numerous variety of changes which human ingenuity and power daily produce. When a number of masons and labourers unite their physical force, and direct it in a certain manner in order to raise a wall, we clearly perceive not only that the effects will follow; but from the fitness of the agents, that such and such must be the certain and inevitable results. Their mechanical knowledge and com-

bined muscular force render it impossible that the materials should not be removed from one place to another, elevated to the wall and laid in a certain order. The stones and mortar again placed in a certain situation necessarily constitute a wall. And if four walls of a certain height and length be placed at right angles, they necessarily enclose a space; and if again a roof of certain materials be laid over all, a house is formed, which, by its very nature, excludes the wind and rain. In this and similar series of causes and effects, the various antecedents are constituted causes, not merely by the possession of what are styled their essential properties, but by the mode or circumstances in which they exist. Stones and mortar do not necessarily constitute a wall, nor do four walls necessarily enclose a space; it is these materials only when placed in a certain situation that produce these effects. In all the changes which are effected in the mere modes of things, therefore, we do not regard the antecedents as causes on account of their essential properties, for which we can give no account; but taking it as a matter of fact that they possess such and such attributes, when viewed in certain circumstances, they are intuitively perceived to be causes, which of necessity must produce their proper results. The adaptation which constitutes them causes is obvious, and acknowledged previous to all experience. A well made

glove or boot is at once perceived to possess an adaptation to cover and protect the foot or the hand ; and it might be amusing to attempt to perplex the unsophisticated understanding, by endeavouring to convince a manufacturer of these articles, that they possessed no property calculated to secure the invariable sequence of the effects for which they are designed. The most ignorant workman would ridicule the philosophy of both Mr. Hume and Dr. Brown, and prove himself better acquainted with the nature of causation than they both, were they to tell him that the foot and leg's being covered is the invariable consequent of a well-fitted boot, in certain circumstances, namely, when put on ; but that the antecedent and consequent are all which we can perceive, and that we cannot discover why the one is followed by the other, nor give any reason why the boot is followed by its consequent, that is, why it covers the foot and leg. The indignant mechanic would soon explain to them in what consisted the power of the antecedent to secure its consequent, and his own power, moreover, to render the boot such an antecedent, he could tell them, consisted in his mechanical strength, which, when directed in a certain manner, was well adapted, and hence as necessarily and certainly produced the uniform consequent called a boot, as the invariable antecedent so called is, in certain circumstances, followed by

its constant, uniform, and invariable consequent, namely, the leg and foot's being covered and protected from the inclemency of the weather. Let him give the antecedent a different shape or size, and he might still call it a large or a small boot, a well or an ill shaped one, but it could no longer be the invariable antecedent of the supposed effect.

In all cases of this nature, then, we perceive an adaptation and fitness, or by whatever name we choose to call it according to the different subjects in which it is found, which is expressed generally by the term *power*, and which constitutes the substance a cause, and secures the uniformity of the sequence. Power, in such instances, is thus perfectly known, and hence we distinctly perceive not only that the effect follows as a matter of fact, but that it must follow and cannot but follow, without a contradiction as obvious as that two and two are not four. In the cases adduced, the whole mystery of causation, therefore, if a thing so obvious should ever have been conceived mysterious, lies open to the understanding and the senses. From the very nature of the antecedent and consequent, we perceive as plainly, that, in certain circumstances, they are inseparably connected, as we see that a whole is equal to all its parts. That such and such causes, in instances similar to those produced above, must necessarily produce such and

such effects, is a truth which, in the human understanding, rests upon the same foundation as the truth that such and such causes exist. The adaptation or power is perceived as a property inherent in the cause, and so long as the present order of the universe remains unchanged by Him who at first ordained it, the effect is perceived to be the necessary and inevitable result, and the uniformity of its sequence is fixed as a matter of course.

The instances of causation in which we have a clear and adequate idea of power, form by far the majority of the cases of cause and effect which, in ordinary circumstances, come under our observation and attract our notice. All the adaptations of size, form, position, &c. which we behold in nature, and all the changes which men produce by their own power, or which are produced by power of a similar sort, belong to this class of causes. The labours of all the busy millions of our population, the mechanical arts, the manufactures, the agriculture, the building, the navigation, the wars, the commerce of the country; all the numerous and mighty changes which by the power and industry of man transform the face of the world, are nothing but the combined results of changes which are effected in the mere accidents of things. The timber which composes the proudest navies, and the materials which raise the most magnificent and

splendid cities, have undergone no change but that of place and form ; and in all those innumerable and stupendous monuments of human art, therefore, the nature of causation and power is perfectly understood. Here and there the agencies of nature, as in the chemical arts, are introduced, and more intimate changes are effected in the nature of things, of the causes of which, as we shall just see, we must confess our ignorance ; but in all the grand and numberless effects of human power, our knowledge of that which constitutes a cause must be classed among the clearest and most adequate of our conceptions.

So far then our knowledge of power extends ; but if we advance a step farther and inquire into the causes of those changes which take place in the more essential properties of matter, our senses fail us, and we are left entirely in the dark respecting the nature of the attributes which constitute any substance a cause. We cannot discover how the volition acts upon the nerves and muscles and produces animal motion, how fire dissolves metal, nor why the magnet attracts iron. We know merely that lead, for instance, placed in a certain temperature, becomes liquid, or that iron, placed near a magnet, approaches towards it ; and, with Dr. Brown, we may state the fact, by saying, that such a consequent invariably follows such an antecedent, but nothing more.

To attempt to go beyond this exceeds our present means of perception, and, in so doing, we leave the conclusions of sound philosophy for the groundless conjectures of a misdirected imagination. In such cases we know power only by its effects, as we know the sensible qualities of matter, which are examples of powers whose natures are unknown. We do not, indeed, in such instances, deny that there *are* powers, for this were to deny the existence of the material world, and to recur to the theory of impressions and ideas as the sole entities, but we know that there are powers simply because their effects are felt by our sensations.

Should we then, from these instances, conclude with Dr. Brown, that power, as inherent in substances, is not some adaptation or fitness, in some respects similar to that which we discovered in the former class of cases, and which renders the uniformity of the sequences necessary, and the supposition that they should be otherwise a contradiction? By no means: this were in opposition to every principle of sound reasoning. All that can legitimately be inferred from a negative induction or the want of facts, is not respecting the subjects which we examine, but our own knowledge, that, from our limited faculties, we possess no means of discovering the nature of the power in the particular instances. We are in a similar situation with the philosopher

who is required to determine, with the naked eye, whether or not a certain body is a simple substance. Judging from his vision, he would say it seems so ; but he would recollect that his eye is not the proper instrument to determine the question, and until the substance be subjected to a chemical analysis, he would be content to acknowledge his ignorance. So it is with all the instances of causation which Dr. Brown adduces. Nothing can be inferred from them but our inability to perceive the nature of the power in the particular instance. But after, in other cases, it has been ascertained that a certain adaptation, called power, constitutes a cause, we are warranted to draw the universal conclusion, that every invariable sequence is the result of power, on the same principle that the chemist infers that all the substances of the same species are composed of certain elements, because such he has found to be the composition of some individuals. This conclusion, as well as Dr. Brown's, rests upon a partial induction, but the material difference is, that his is founded on the want of facts, while the one at which we arrive is drawn from facts known and observed ; and is entitled, therefore, to be held universal, until facts of an opposite tendency are brought to disprove it. Though nothing were observed but mere sequence in every instance of causation except one, in which it was found that it de-

pendent on a certain adaptation or power of the antecedent, and could not take place without it; with this solitary instance, we could at once overturn the finest theory, founded on any, all but universal, induction, in support of a negation, and establish the opposite conclusion universally, till some fact were found, in like manner, to limit its extension. Power is as necessary to causation as the heart, or some substitute for it, is for the circulation of the blood, and the maintenance of human life; and as we conclude that all men possess that blood vessel, though we have seen but few bodies dissected, with the same certainty we conclude, that every cause possesses a power which of necessity secures the invariableness of the consequent, though we cannot in every case say what that power is, and present it to the eye, the taste, or the touch.

We return then to the doctrine of the old school, or rather to the doctrine of the common understanding and universal belief of mankind, and on every principle of sound philosophy and right reason, maintain that a cause is a substance possessed of a certain adaptation, fitness or power, which necessarily secures the constant and invariable sequence of the effect. In certain cases, this power is perceived and known as an object of sense; in others, it is discovered only by its effects. In the former we know it as a property

inherent in the substance; in the latter it is known only as a power, that is, something which produces an effect. In the one class of cases, knowing the power, we can with perfect certainty predict the effect prior to all experience; in the other, from our experience of the effect, we infer the existence of the power, and then we reason respecting the future sequences with the same accuracy and certainty as in the instances where the power is known as an object of perception. Hence, in either case, the practical law of causation, both for the past and future, is fully understood, and we reason upon it with the same certainty as the astronomer applies the law of gravitation to account for all the phenomena of the solar system.

We are now prepared to perceive the ground on which rests our belief of the future uniformity of events, and to appreciate the merits of the dispute between Mr. Hume and Dr. Brown, respecting the source of this belief. Mr. Hume, though he denied the reality of power, could not deny the consciousness of the belief that a cause will be for the future, as it has been during the past, invariably followed by its effect. Without the existence of power, the only foundation on which this belief rests, he found great difficulty to account for the feeling in the mind of an intelligent and rational being. As the most likely principle that could explain the phenome-

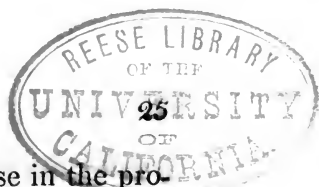
non, he had recourse to association, and maintained that, having repeatedly experienced a sequence of events, we are ultimately led to believe, that things, for the future, will follow in the same train as, by experience we have known, they have done for the past. There is no doubt that, to a certain extent, this is the tendency of association, but, it is worthy of notice, that it is chiefly in minds of weak understanding, children, idiots, and the lower animals, to whom it seems to supply, in a great measure, the want of reason and foresight, that its influence is so considerable as to produce, in any considerable degree, the effect which he ascribed to it. As the understanding and reasoning powers acquire strength, it loses its influence, and leaves the belief to which Mr. Hume conceives it to give birth, wholly unaccounted for; while, as a matter of fact, the feeling is proportionally strengthened and confirmed. Dr. Brown has accordingly most triumphantly refuted the fallacy of Mr. Hume, and demonstrated the necessity of accounting for the belief on some other principle.

Dr. Brown himself, however, agreeing with Mr. Hume in rejecting the idea of power, was equally at a loss to account for the feeling. He had recourse to an expedient more specious perhaps, but not more philosophical and satisfactory, and maintained, that the belief itself is an intuitive principle. In this attempt to explain the

fact, we have, at least, one of the finest proofs how much the most acute and powerful understandings may be misled by the influence of feeling, when excited by party interests, or the desire to support a favourite theory. There is here quite a contrast to the usual accuracy and penetration exhibited by the analytical investigations of this distinguished metaphysician. Unfortunately the belief in question is totally destitute of all the marks by which intuitive principles are usually distinguished, as every one in the least acquainted with the subject will readily perceive. His exposure of Hume's mistake, indeed, is a sufficient refutation of his own principle. Ten thousand instances of regular sequence, it is admitted, could never entitle a rational mind to infer the uniformity of sequence for the future from the experience of the past ; and it would be strange if the same mind, on the experience of only one instance, could intuitively perceive such a uniformity, in a case where mere uniformity of sequence is all that is to be known. Intuitive principles or axioms are usually inexplicable by reason, as being themselves the most obvious of all truths, and the foundation on which all reasonings proceed, but they can never surely be at variance with its clearest dictates. If regular sequence really constitute the whole of causation, and if, by an intuitive principle without the aid of experience, we be able to infer its future uni-

formity, the most casual events coming together must be considered, till experience correct the mistake, in the relation of cause and effect. The attempt to obviate the difficulty, by alleging our knowledge of co-existing series, is perfectly futile. It is undoubtedly admitted, that in ordinary cases, “ every one knows sufficiently the distinction of what is casual only and what is invariable in the order of nature ;”* but this is nothing but a begging of the question. How do we make the distinction ? Is it by the observation of the mere sequence ; or is it by perceiving some property, adaptation, or congruity in the antecedent which points it out as a cause ? Every one knows that it is ; and Dr. Brown is compelled to admit, that to his imaginary intuitive principle another really intuitive principle, or, which is equivalent, the universal, or, as he expresses it, the almost universal belief and experience of mankind is directly opposed.

There is indeed an intuitive principle involved in that which Dr. Brown believed such, and by which, perhaps, he has been in part misled. It is, that a nonentity cannot produce an entity or substance, nor effect any change in substances which already exist—*e nihilo nihil fit*, nothing produces nothing, if we may be allowed to consider the old maxim as regarding not the materials of



which a thing is made, but the cause in the proper sense of the word. This principle is certainly self-evident, and contains the whole idea of causation, except the uniformity of sequence. That something produces something is all that is required to identify this axiom, and it might be clearly demonstrated, that there is no contradiction in conceiving that a cause may produce its effects without any regularity, as the great First Cause, for instance, is conceived to produce all possible effects without any principle of uniformity but his sovereign pleasure. In this, it might be shown, were it the proper place, consists the mistake of the fatalist, going beyond this fundamental axiom of causation and applying the law of causation, which is found to prevail in our world, as the law of causation universally. The law of causation under which we live we can trace back only to the creation, when, for ought we know, it was established for the first time, when God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind ; and it was so ;" but how far it extends over the universe, and especially among intelligent and moral agents, it is not for us to determine.

On this principle, then, depends our knowledge of the external world, and indeed of every thing except sensations and ideas, which are objects of consciousness. Whenever we experience

a sensation from without, we immediately refer it to an external substance as its cause. It seems indeed, connected with sensation generally, and in infants and brutes operates instinctively like many of our other principles. The bee, for example, in providing for the approach of winter, and the bird in preparing accommodation for its young, do by instinct what men perform by reason and foresight. The infant, a few weeks after birth, and many animals apparently with almost their first sensations, have the knowledge of an external world, and are thus correctly making the practical application of the maxim, *e nihilo nihil fit*, which is acted upon as a practical principle long before it is formally recognised by the understanding and received with all the pomp of the schools.

There is another principle, that of association, namely, which at an equally early period, perhaps much earlier and as soon as the mind has got one idea to follow another, comes into action and begins to co-operate with the one just mentioned. When the infant observer has once noticed one thing followed by another, association comes seasonably to his aid, and when he again beholds the antecedent, the idea of the consequent is instantly suggested. Thus at a very early period of childhood, long before the little adventurer is able to leave the arms of his nurse, provision is made both for his safety

and for the improvement of his understanding, by the observation of power and causation. When he has once experienced the consequences of touching the flame of the candle, the sight of the candle, on the principle of association, serves all the practical purposes of the knowledge of causation and the necessary effects of fire on the human frame. Without knowing on what causation depends, he connects cause and effect as constant antecedent and consequent; and thus, by having the subjects before him, he has an opportunity, as soon as the powers of the understanding begin to unfold themselves, of discovering the adaptation which constitutes the power of a cause.

By and by the young philosopher begins to inquire the reasons of things, and discovering the adaptation or power of one thing to produce another, to perceive that the sequences which his experience has found uniform, must of necessity have been so, and from the very nature and known properties of the antecedents could not be otherwise. In the progress of his knowledge, he frequently discovers that what he has been wont to consider as cause and effect, have only casually come together. Such discoveries tend to deliver him from the undue influence of association, so powerful in childhood, and quicken his observation of the indications of the powers which secure the permanent and uniform sequence. In in-

stances of cotemporary sequences, he is sometimes a little at a loss to ascertain to which cause each effect is to be attributed ; but in most of those cases, even when the power itself cannot be observed, there is an aptness and congruity between the real cause and effect which usually secures him from mistake. Previous to all experience, a piece of coal, timber, or any combustible matter might be considered as likely to produce a certain chemical action on gunpowder as a spark of fire ; but on throwing a lighted match among a quantity of it, and beholding the smoke and flame produced by the deflagration, the most inexperienced inquirer into the nature of causation would never doubt that the fire, and not the matter of which the match was composed, was the cause of the explosion. It is generally so in all ordinary instances of cause and effect. Though the powers in the particular cases are unknown, there are certain congruities and indications of the power, which, with little difficulty, enable the observer to ascribe each effect to its proper cause. Thus the inquirer gradually and correctly extends his induction, and it is not long till he draws the universal conclusion, that wherever there is uniform sequence, there is a power in the antecedent to produce the consequent and to render irregularity impossible.

This, then, being, as we conceive, the manner in which mankind obtain their idea of causation, it appears that Mr. Hume's account of the origin

of the belief of invariable sequence is not so far from the truth as Dr. Brown seemed to imagine. Though there is an instinctive and intuitive principle on which the conception ultimately rests, the belief of constant and uniform sequence, as a whole, is got from experience; and association, at first, exerts a powerful influence in its acquirements. On the intuitive principle above noticed, we refer an effect to something as its cause; by experience and association we primarily learn the uniformity of the sequence; and, as the powers of the understanding are developed, we discover the adaptation or power on which the uniformity of sequence depends. Mr. Hume was misled by his desire to support his favourite doctrine of the sole existence of impressions and ideas, but here as in many other places, he proves himself the original thinker and acute observer; and even in maintaining monstrous absurdity and falsehood, exhibits much sound philosophy, and makes important additions to true science.

As soon, then, as a human being has got the true idea of power and causation, he is prepared to act his part in life, as the philosopher, the agriculturist, the merchant, or the statesman; and to attain an end or produce an effect, by the use of a series of proper means. Certain causes, he knows, must produce such and such effects, and if he employ the proper means, he cannot fail of obtaining his object. This belief

of the future uniform sequence of things, rests upon the same foundation as his belief of their existence ; for both are obtained by the perception of properties, and so long therefore as things are perceived to exist, they must also be perceived to possess the powers on which causation depends. The sequence has been constant and uniform since the creation of the world, unless when interrupted by the power of the Creator ; and must necessarily remain constant and invariable till the present order of things be changed, when the mighty angel shall stand upon the earth and upon the sea, and lifting up his hand to heaven, shall swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer.

OF AGENCY.

THE most general division of substances, on the principle of cause and effect, is into Creator and creature—the eternal and almighty Creator on the one hand being the sole universal cause, and on the other, all other substances besides being the effects of his power.

Created substances themselves, again, by the appointment of the Creator, stand related to each other as cause and effect. From the lowest link in the chain of created being to the highest, all substances are known to us as causes ; and the

higher we ascend, their causation assumes a more important character, till, among the higher classes of beings which inhabit this earth, it may be considered as a sort of creation in some respects analogous to that of the Deity. Inert and inanimate matter produces changes on substances which already exist; vegetables have the power of producing fruits and seeds, from which spring other organised bodies possessed of vegetable life; animals give birth to living and sentient beings like themselves, among whom man, in a higher degree, resembles the Creator, in bringing into existence a race of beings whose future life shall be commensurate with eternity, and who, therefore, in some sense, may be considered new substances. In this process of generation, there is something analogous to creation; in all other instances of causation, there is nothing effected but changes in substances which have already existence.

All the causes which compose the world in which we live may be divided into four great classes:—inanimate matter, vegetables, irrational animals, and moral beings. Among these a most regular and beautiful gradation subsists, and all the higher or more specific classes possess the natures of the lower or more general, with the addition of the specific nature by which they are distinguished. Vegetables, in addition to their vegetable life, have all the essential attributes of

matter. Animals, besides the sentient and voluntary powers by which they are distinguished, retain all the attributes of inert and vegetable substances ; for animal life, as it is called, apart from sensation, is nothing essentially different from mere vegetation. And man, at the head of the scale, to the essential powers of the merely material and vegetative substances and of the sentient and voluntary animal, adds an intelligent mind, capable of perceiving moral distinctions ; and, hence, is constituted a rational and moral being.

Of these four great species of causes, the two last, namely, the voluntary and the moral, are usually distinguished by the name of agents, and their effects called actions. The same name is occasionally applied to other causes, when we talk, for instance, of the agencies of nature, chemical agents, chemical actions, &c. ; but in these cases the terms are employed in a figurative and technical sense ; and in the present Essay we restrain them to their common and proper acceptation. Cause and effect are thus the genus of which agents and actions are the species—agents being voluntary and moral causes and actions their effects.

In every division of this sort, if correct, the species, as logicians inform us, must possess all the essential attributes of the genus, together with the properties peculiar to itself ; and all,

therefore, which is true of cause and effect generally, must be true of agent and action, besides what may be affirmed respecting them in particular. But as this is occasionally denied and frequently not well understood, even by modern writers ; let us now proceed to ascertain, by a brief examination of the nature of agency, how far the laws of causation extends among sentient and moral beings.

To preserve us from mistake respecting this subject, and to guard us against the absurd dogmas of fatalism, a preliminary observation is necessary. Since every cause invariably and necessarily produces its effect, the fatalist infers that, therefore, events cannot be otherwise than they are, and hence denies the foundation of all moral obligation. This conclusion proceeds upon a misconception of the true nature of causation. Every event in our world has a cause, and every cause necessarily and infallibly produces its effect ; but in making this affirmation, it is always understood that such is the case, when the cause is allowed to operate ; but it is never meant that there is any cause, except, indeed, the Almighty First Cause, whose power may not be resisted and overcome by a cause more powerful. A great majority of the instances of causation are examples of one cause being resisted and frustrated by another. There is no cause more powerful or infallible in its effects than the

principle of gravitation, and, nevertheless, animal agency consists in an ability to resist this law; and all the stupendous works of human ingenuity and power are nothing but monuments of the extensive and successful inroads which man has made upon its empire. There is, therefore, nothing in the universe, except facts which have already taken place, which is fixed and immutable in the sense of the fatalist. Many of the actions of man should be otherwise, as none presumes to deny, and all of them may and could be otherwise, on the principle of causation. To maintain then, in any instance, the doctrine of fatalism, is virtually to assert, that there exists no cause more powerful than the one in question, and hence, to deny the existence of a great portion of the universe. As we pass along the mighty chain of causes, we cannot stop at any link and say, that here is a cause whose effects cannot be otherwise than they are, until we come to the end of the chain—to Him who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end. His actions indeed are irresistible by his creatures, and cannot be otherwise than they really are; but here is the great security against the absurd and pernicious dogmas of fatalism, that Jehovah, the sole first cause, is a being infinitely wise, benevolent, and merciful, whose actions are all right, and just what they should be. That such a being reigns supreme in the universe and does

according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, is the grand source, or, at least, should be the grand and the only source of security and happiness to all intelligent and moral beings. If, in a free state, the humblest peasant, conscious of integrity, finds it his happiness to look with confidence to the equal laws of his country, and bid defiance to the proudest and most powerful seigneur who would dare to oppress him; how much greater the felicity under the government of a being infinitely just to render to every man according to his works, almighty in power to protect the injured and redress their wrongs, unbounded in benevolence to secure their happiness, and in whose inconceivable mercy, as God manifest in flesh, even the guilty may find a refuge. Well might the enlightened and patriotic king of Israel exclaim, in the rapturous moment of inspiration, Jehovah reigneth, let the earth rejoice.

There are two species of agency, then, voluntary and moral, whose nature it is proposed to examine. In animal or voluntary agency, the will of the agent or, to speak more correctly, the agent willing is the cause, and the consequent muscular motions of his body are the effects. In moral agency, the volitions are the effects, and his perceptions or, in other words, the agent perceiving and understanding is the cause. In

the one case, the agent regulates his actions by his volitions ; in the other, he regulates his volitions by the perceptions of his understanding. Thus, in the one, the effects are visible without ; in the other, wholly within.

In all instances of both these sorts of causation, we merely know, it may be noticed, the matter of fact, that the antecedent is followed by its consequent ; but cannot perceive the power which constitutes the cause. We are conscious merely that a certain perception excites a certain volition ; and, again, that that volition is followed by a certain action, but of nothing more. We cannot explain how or why the sequence takes place ; for we are conscious only of the matter of fact, that it actually does take place. In this, then, as in a multitude of other cases, we directly perceive nothing more than the sequence, but knowing, by the general conclusion at which we formerly arrived, the stability of the principle on which it depends, this very limited knowledge is perfectly adequate to all practical purposes.

That which peculiarly constitutes a being an animal or voluntary agent, it is plain, is the possession of a sentient nature, or the susceptibilities of pleasurable and painful feelings. These feelings necessarily imply desire ; for it were a contradiction to conceive that a feeling is painful, and that for its own sake we do not desire to be

delivered from it ; or that we do not enjoy a pleasurable feeling when present, and desire to recover it when lost. This is the general law of a sentient being, for we do not at present talk of particulars. All the feelings which have reference to the future give birth to desire, or rather, in many instances, they are desire itself. Now, it will be afterwards shown that volition is a complex state of mind resulting from the desire, or in instances of opposing feelings, the predominant desire of an object, and the belief that the performance or attainment of the object is in our own power. If we conceive the object to be some action of our own, which at present may be conveniently done, and which indeed always is so, as the immediate effect, volition is simply the predominant desire to act in a certain manner. And thus it appears that volition is the direct result of the feelings of pleasure and pain by which a sentient nature is distinguished.

Volition, then, as is universally admitted, is the great and only source of action in a merely voluntary agent. When free from all compulsion and restraint, he uniformly does what he wills. Volition or the agent willing is the antecedent, and the action is the consequent, as invariably and uniformly as a stone, when left in free space, falls to the ground by the power of gravitation. In this respect, therefore, there is no difference between voluntary agency and cau-

sation generally. The same uniform and invariable sequence is found in both.

The specific difference which a voluntary agent exhibits depends of course upon his sentient nature, by which he is distinguished from the insensible vegetable. The vegetable as well as the animal has the power of motion in opposition to the law of gravitation ; voluntary motion, in consequence of his sentient nature, is peculiar to the latter. That which renders any object or action pleasurable is its being addressed to some susceptibility of feeling or desire ; and that, therefore, which is calculated to gratify the predominant desire, must necessarily be the most agreeable. Music is agreeable, because it is calculated to affect the susceptibility of hearing in a certain manner ; food, because it allays the appetite of hunger ; the prosperity of friends, because it gratifies the feeling of benevolence ; and the stronger, therefore, those feelings are, the greater becomes the pleasure. Hence, it is plain, since volition coincides with the strongest desire, that the agent, in acting upon his volition, secures to himself the greatest possible amount of present enjoyment. We do not at present take into account the future consequences of action ; for we are considering the agent not as an intelligent and moral, but simply as a voluntary agent, all whose actions, of course, regard only the present. The

general amount of his happiness must depend upon his circumstances ; and were they such as we conceive man and all sentient beings to have been placed previous to the fall, perfect happiness without any alloy of pain, would have been the inevitable result of the general law of his voluntary nature. Now that he is placed in a less favourable situation, as a mere sentient being, he still makes the best of his condition in securing the largest possible amount of immediate pleasure. Every action is, at the time, the most agreeable ; and were it possible to deviate from the law of his voluntary agency, it were not possible to act in any way so conducive to the enjoyment of the moment. Remorse, misery and ruin may be the result ; but the agent for the moment makes the best of his circumstances, and enjoys all the present happiness of which he is capable.

Hence then by uniting this consideration with the general law of causation, we have the idea of voluntary agency. An animal or voluntary agent uniformly acts according to his will, and in so doing, secures to himself the greatest amount of present enjoyment.

The next species of agency which is to be considered, is that in which volition is regarded as an effect, and not as a cause ; and hence styled moral agency. The percipient or intelligent being, as was formerly said, is the cause, and his volition the effect. And here, therefore, as

to the former case, we have to ascertain the universal prevalence of the law of causation, and then to discover the property peculiar to man as a moral agent. As this forms the leading subject of the Essay, our remarks shall be brief, leaving what may require further confirmation and illustration to be afterwards more fully examined.

The perception of external objects, in general, accompanies a sentient nature ; and, in man, desire and volition always imply the perception or conception of an object. There are a few exceptions, indeed, as in the first desires of infants, animals possessed of only one sense, &c. ; but as these do not affect the general character of agency, they are not to be noticed in the present inquiry. In general, there can be no desire without the knowledge of something desired, and no volition without an object. To a man distressed with hunger, the conception of food, as the means of his relief, determines him to partake of it ; to a compassionate man, the perception of misery awakens a desire to remove it ; and to the covetous man, the idea of his neighbour's wealth excites in his breast a strong desire of possessing it. The knowledge and conception of the object, in all such cases, is usually called a motive ; and, it is plain, it derives its power from its being addressed to the susceptibility or feeling of which it is the object. From

its adaptation to its proper susceptibility, such a perception at once excites a corresponding feeling, and, by this means, gives rise to volition. Hence, it is admitted on all hands, that man never wills nor acts without a motive, and it were inconsistent with his percipient nature to conceive that he should. He might, indeed, be pained, for instance, by some internal sensation, and as a sentient being, no doubt, might desire to be delivered from it, without any conception as the cause of the feeling; but he could not form any volition or purpose to remove it, till he had some idea of what he believed likely to prove a remedy. So far then, there is no difference of opinion, that, in every instance, volition is produced by the perception of an object or a motive. The sequence is universally allowed, though whether the sequence is uniform and constant, is sometimes called in question.¹

It cannot be maintained, it is obvious, that the same motive uniformly produces the same volition; for that is manifestly untrue, and is not consistent with the law of causation. The same cause produces very different effects, in consequence of a change of circumstances; and all that is affirmed, therefore, by a certain class of writers, is, that the same motive, in the same circumstances, invariably produces the same volition. This undoubtedly must be admitted, if it is considered what the circumstances are. The

principal circumstance is the strength of the susceptibility to which the motive is addressed, and as a mental susceptibility can be known and its strength estimated only by the feeling which is produced, if the desire arising from it is not of the same intensity, it is immediately inferred that the motive is not in the same circumstances in the cases compared. Another circumstance, which, indeed, is virtually implied in the one just mentioned, is the co-existence of feelings of a like or opposite tendency; and if these are found in greater number or in greater degrees of strength in the one case than in the other, it is concluded, again, that the motive is acting in different circumstances, and cannot produce the same result. Hence, when the desire produced by the motive is the same, and all the co-temporary desires the same, the volition must necessarily be the same, unless we conceive the contradiction of a thing being and not being simultaneously. The circumstances, in short, are such that they can be estimated only by the effects; and unless therefore the results are exactly alike in all instances of like motives, it is concluded that the circumstances are also different; hence it must be admitted, or, at least, it cannot be disproved, that the same motive, in the same circumstances, uniformly and invariably produces the same volition. Such, accordingly, is the conclusion at which the experience and common understanding

of mankind arrive. Were a benevolent man to behold a friend in the same circumstances of distress as one whom he formerly relieved, it would be universally inferred that, all considerations being exactly alike, he would act now as he acted before. Were his distressed friend as much beloved, equally deserving of his sympathy, his own ability to relieve him equal, his compassion for him acknowledged the same, no new motive checking his generous purpose, in short, all the circumstances exactly similar, it would be conceived impossible that he should not act the same part; and were he to act differently, all mankind would believe that surely his affection was not so warm, his ability less, or he had some new motive for acting as he did, and could not conceive it possible that a man, placed in the same circumstances, acted so different a part. The reasoning of vulgar experience is perfectly correct; for, in this instance, there is no means of judging of the circumstances, as was just said, but by the effects.

In moral agency, therefore, as well as in voluntary, the general law of causation universally prevails—the antecedent, in similar circumstances, is invariably followed by the same consequent. The peculiar property of the moral agent is the next to be ascertained; and as the law of causation which here prevails consists in the fact, that the agent acts uniformly from mo-

tives, we have just to ascertain the peculiar motives of the moral agent.

Percipient as well as sentient powers are common to man with the inferior animals ; and if by intelligence is meant that perception of relations which Dr. Brown terms relative suggestion, this also, in some measure, seems common to the brutes. The difference, in this respect, is, that man possesses intelligence in a much higher degree, and, in addition to those perceptions which are common, perceives many relations with which the lower animals are totally unacquainted, and by which therefore he is distinguished from them. The chief of these is the perception of that relation or quality of actions expressed by the terms virtuous and vicious, right and wrong, which includes the relations in which man, as a moral being, stands to his Creator. It is the perception of this class of relations which constitutes man a moral and responsible agent ; and it is here therefore that we must look for the motives peculiar to the moral agency of man. As the perception of an object addressed to his appetites and other susceptibilities is the motive which determines the will of the brute, so the perception of right and wrong is the motive by which the moral agent regulates his volitions. He resolves to do one thing because it is right, and to refrain from doing another because it is wrong. The possession of this species

of motives is the distinguishing property of moral agency, in which consists the resemblance of man to his Creator ; and in other respects, he is to be considered only as the head of the animal creation, far above them indeed in point of perceptive and intellectual power, but still one of the same class of creatures, not less than as a sentient being he confessedly shares a common nature. If, however, we be disposed to comprehend in our account of human agency some other of the perceptions by which he is distinguished from the brutes, we may consider him as a provident being, capable of perceiving the relation of present, past and future, and of estimating the advantages or disadvantages of present conduct in reference to his future life or to the whole eternity of his existence. There are besides a number of other perceptions by which he differs from the brute ; and if, in this outline, we express them generally as the perception of what is proper and becoming in the various circumstances in which he is required to act, we may describe a moral agent as a being who has the power of regulating his volitions as he judges morally right, advantageous, or proper. The perceptions of these relations are what are usually included under the general term, the understanding, and we may therefore more briefly express the same idea, by saying, according to the old principle of philosophers, that man is able to regulate his volitions

by the dictates of his understanding, always including under that general term the perception of the important relation of right and wrong as the principal idea.*

Such, then, is the peculiar character of moral agency ; and the analogy, it deserves notice, between this and voluntary agency is complete. The same volition, in the same circumstances, that is, the agent willing the same thing is uniformly the cause of the same action ; and the same perception, that is, the agent perceiving the same thing, in the same circumstances, is as uniformly the cause of the same volition. In both the law of causation universally prevails. The property by which animal or voluntary agency is distinguished from the lower species of causation in vegetables, is that, in all his actions, the voluntary agent secures to himself the greatest present

* Drs. Reid, Price and other philosophers, who hold that " the moral faculty or conscience is both an active and intellectual power," are certainly in the right. No other hypothesis is consistent with the phenomena. Like many of the other faculties, it consists of a perception accompanied by its appropriate feeling. The same understanding which perceives mathematical truths is employed in moral subjects ; and by the constitution of our nature, the perception of moral truths awakens the solemn feelings of approbation and remorse. Hence the conscience may be improved or perverted in two ways. Like the judgment on other subjects, it may be well informed or misled, and therefore we talk of an enlightened or unenlightened conscience, or the feeling may be vigorous or languid, and hence the expression a seared or awakened conscience. The intellectual part only of the faculty of conscience is included under the general term, understanding.

amount of sentient happiness: the property, in like manner, by which moral agency is distinguished from voluntary, the species of causation immediately below it, is the ability to determine his volitions by the dictates of his understanding. We do not affirm that he always does so; for this question shall afterwards be examined; but it is plain that so long as he discharges his duty and retains his innocence, he cannot act otherwise. If, in any instances he resolve to act without the approbation of his understanding, in doing what he considers not most advantageous upon the whole, or what he believes morally wrong, he is self convicted of having acted a foolish and criminal part. So long as he maintains the dignity of his moral character, by holding fast his integrity, he necessarily controls and regulates his will by the dictates of his understanding, and does what he judges morally right.

These two agencies then, voluntary and moral, are both united in man. As a voluntary agent, when free from compulsion and restraint, he uniformly acts upon his volition, since here there are no exceptions; for, though his moral nature is depraved and exhibits sad aberrations from the original principle of his constitution, man, the animal, remains true to the law of his sentient nature. As a moral agent, on the other hand, when acting his proper part, he uniformly fixes

his volitions according to the perceptions of his understanding, and wills to act as he judges right. Hence, as man, the animal, by acting upon his volition, invariably obtains the greatest possible amount of present enjoyment; so man, the moral agent, acting upon the law of his moral constitution, and doing what is right, inevitably secures to himself, under the righteous government of the Almighty, the eternal felicity which his immortality fits him to enjoy. As the author of such a nature, the character of God is strikingly illustrated. In the creation of the inanimate and vegetable worlds, his power and wisdom are manifestly displayed; in the creation of the numerous tribes of voluntary agents, his benevolence appears; but in the creation of man, his infinite wisdom, his boundless benevolence and moral holiness are at once strikingly exhibited.

This cursory view of agency, in general, may serve to facilitate the subsequent inquiries, and to preserve us from some of the misconceptions frequently entertained on the subject of liberty. For it is plain, before any question can be instituted respecting the liberty or necessity of an agent, his existence must be first admitted; and it is equally plain, that to discover the liberty or necessity of which he is the subject, his peculiar agency must also be ascertained. What may be liberty to one agent may be necessity, or, pro-

bably, no possible state of another whose agency is of a different character ; and without this preliminary knowledge therefore, the inquirer will be in danger of committing as absurd and egregious a mistake as were a chemist, confounding a number of acid and alkaline substances, to reason from one as if it were another. Hence most of the misconceptions and inconsistencies with which writers on free-will are so frequently chargeable. Not to mention fatalism on the one hand and contingency on the other, which both virtually deny the reality of causation and hence the existence of the universe ; more judicious authors not unfrequently exhibit strange inaccuracy of conception. One able divine and no contemptible metaphysician describes man as a *free necessary agent*. If, by *free*, he means, as he does, that man acts as he chooses or according to his volition ; and if, by *necessary*, he means, as he also does, that he must act in a certain manner on the principle of causation and cannot act otherwise ; the epithets are exactly of the same import, and are both necessarily implied, if words have any meaning, in the term agent ; and it would not therefore be more absurd to describe a certain well known fluid by calling it liquid fluid water. If a voluntary agent is free because he does as he wills, he is necessary for the very same reason ; for so long as he is free, he cannot do otherwise than invariably act upon

his volition. To free us from all such misconceptions, let us have an agent before us as the subject of inquiry. As the chemist takes for granted the existence of the substance whose elements he proposes to discover, and the anatomist that of the body which he proceeds to dissect ; so must the inquirer into the nature of liberty admit, as an indispensable preliminary, that man is really the sort of agent which he is. The anatomist does not question the reality, but inquire the manner of the existence of the human body—how the various parts are situated, mutually related and co-operate in the functions of animal life. So must the moral inquirer investigate only the condition of the agent whose existence he has already assumed ; and whether he is found free or necessary, he must not deny that he really exists ; for he would then deprive himself of a subject, and be placed in the same ridiculous situation as were a chemist gravely to propose to discover the elements of non-entity, by subjecting it to a process of analysis.

AN ESSAY
ON
MORAL FREEDOM.

SECTION I.

NATURE OF FREEDOM AND STATEMENT OF THE
QUESTION.

IN every question respecting free agency, it must be taken for granted, it is plain, as the basis of the inquiry, that the agent whose liberty or necessity is to be ascertained actually exists. Holding then, as a matter of fact, that man is a being capable of judging, willing and acting, we now proceed to inquire what is the nature of the liberty which such an agent is capable of enjoying.

Mr. Hume, in treating the subject of liberty and necessity, proposes a very strange method of conducting his inquiries. "It would seem," says he, "that men begin at the wrong end of the question concerning liberty and necessity, when they enter upon it by examining the faculties of the soul, the influence of the under-

standing and the operations of the will. Let them first discuss a more simple question, namely, the operations of body and of brute unintelligent matter, and try whether they can there form any idea of causation and necessity except that of a constant conjunction of objects, and a subsequent inference of the mind from one to the other. If these circumstances form in reality the whole of that necessity which we can conceive in matter, and if these circumstances be also universally acknowledged to take place in mind, the dispute is at an end, or, at least, must be owned to be henceforth merely verbal."

It is one of the most obvious principles of sound reasoning and of the true method of philosophizing, that the peculiar properties of the species are not to be discovered by examining the attributes of the genus. Before Mr. Hume therefore can be permitted to extend his induction so widely in support of his doctrine of necessity, it is necessary to ascertain, whether the specific properties of man, as a rational and voluntary agent, are common to him with brute unintelligent matter. If this is not to be supported in the affirmative, his method of conducting the inquiry is necessarily proved unphilosophical and fallacious. It is just as were a philosopher, in order to ascertain the nature of the smell or colour of a rose, to set himself to consider the solidity of the flower and of the sur-

rounding objects, and then gravely to assure us, that its odour is so many inches in length by so many in breadth and thickness. To convince his readers that his conclusions were legitimately drawn and correctly stated, he might triumphantly ask them, whether they ever experienced or could conceive the existence of fragrance without solidity, and maintain that this property was as essential to roses as to any of the surrounding objects, of which he had just taken the dimensions. Whether or not any hearer might feel disposed to reply in opposition to such arguments, no one would cease to believe that the agreeable smell of a flower and the solidity of a piece of timber are, so far as known to us, things totally different; and that in order to obtain a knowledge of the former, there might be found a surer and more speedy method than to ascertain the nature of the latter.

By the application of this principle then, Mr. Hume might discover some circumstance common to matter and mind, but it is manifest that he could never obtain any knowledge of the peculiar properties of intelligent and voluntary agents. This accordingly he has done. The sum of his argument and the conclusion at which he arrives are contained in the following passage.

“And indeed,” says he, “when we consider how aptly natural and moral evidence link toge-

ther and form only one chain of argument, we shall make no scruple to allow that they are of the same nature and derived from the same principle. A prisoner, who has neither money nor interest, discovers the impossibility of escape, as well when he considers the obstinacy of his guards as the walls and bars with which he is surrounded; and in all his attempts for his freedom, chooses rather to work upon the stone and iron of the one than upon the inflexible nature of the other. The same prisoner, when conducted to the scaffold, foresees his death as certainly from the constancy and fidelity of his guards as from the operations of the axe and wheel. His mind runs over a certain train of ideas; the refusal of the soldiers to permit his escape, the action of the executioner, the separation of his head and body, bleeding, convulsive motions and death. Here is a connected chain of natural causes and voluntary actions, but the mind feels no difference between them in passing from one link to another; nor is less certain of the future event than if they were connected with the objects present to the memory and senses by a train of causes connected together by what we are pleased to call a *physical* necessity. The same experienced union has the same effect on the mind, whether the united objects be motives, volitions and actions, or figure and motion. We may change the names of things, but

their nature and operation on the understanding never change." Hence he asks, "What is meant by liberty, when applied to voluntary actions? We cannot surely mean that actions have so little connection with motives, inclinations and circumstances that the one does not follow with a certain degree of uniformity from the other, and that the one affords no inference from which we can conclude the existence of the other. For these are plain and acknowledged matters of fact."

The reasoning and conclusion of Mr. Hume are here perfectly correct. It is universally allowed, to use his own language, that nothing exists without a cause of its existence, and that chance, when strictly examined, is a mere negative word and means not any real power which has any where a being in nature. The relation of cause and effect is the order which the great Creator has established both in the material and in the intellectual worlds ; and it is as universal as is the fact of his own existence as Creator. It is indeed originally nothing but the great truth, that he is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and of all things which are therein contained ; and that he has endowed them all with certain properties and attributes which constitute what is usually termed their nature. This necessity then, philosophical necessity, as it is usually called, or causation, is all that Mr. Hume

establishes, and of course it is universally admitted. All beings, except the Creator, are in this sense necessary beings, as having a previous cause of their existence; and all actions, including those of the Creator, are necessary events, as being the actions of agents acting each according to the peculiar attributes of his nature.

This philosophical necessity then, or causation, is evidently something much too general, and is not that necessity of which liberty is the contrast. It is necessarily presupposed, as appeared above, in every instance of liberty or necessity, and includes both. Before we can inquire whether an action is the result of freedom or not, we must first conceive it as a matter of fact, that an agent actually exists and exerts the powers peculiar to his nature. Unless there be the existence of an agent, which is one fact philosophically necessary—the Deity being the creator of this agent; and unless there be the actual exertion of his peculiar agency, which is another fact also philosophically necessary, there is no room either for liberty or necessity. There must be both an agent and an action, otherwise the existence either of liberty or necessity is utterly inconceivable.

The nature of actions, of course, is determined by the nature of the agent, and so long therefore as he retains his distinguishing properties, the nature of his actions remains unchanged.

A stone, for example, is possessed of certain properties by which it affects our senses, and thereby reveals to us the fact of its existence. So long as it retains those properties, it continues to produce similar effects, and is acknowledged by us to be what it is ; but were those properties changed, we should either lose the knowledge of its existence altogether, or we would no longer consider it a stone, but pronounce it to be some other substance. So it is with respect to the human agent. So long as he retains the attributes of his nature, he acts in a certain manner, and must so act to retain his peculiar character. This acting in a certain manner renders him a rational and voluntary agent ; and were he acting in a manner essentially different, we could no longer consider him a human being. In the mental as well as the material world, the properties of substances determine what are called the laws of nature ; and the laws of action therefore must remain permanent and uniform, so long as the human agent continues to be what he really is. Hence the correctness of Mr. Hume's conclusion respecting the similarity of the nature and principles of physical and moral evidence. The same principle of causation, as we formerly showed, is the ground of both ; and if, in moral subjects, cause and effect seem less firmly and invariably connected, it arises solely from our knowledge being more vague and limited. In morals, the

motives without and the feelings within are so numerous, and possessed in so very different degrees of strength, and liable besides to be modified by so many incidental circumstances in such a variety of ways, that we can seldom trace an effect to its proper cause ; while, in physics, we generally at once find no difficulty in ascertaining precisely the relation.

All this, however, determines nothing respecting liberty and necessity, properly so called. The fact of universal causation is indeed implied in either of them, in like manner as solidity is necessary to the existence of colour or fragrance, and always presupposed in our conception of these properties ; but fragrance is not more truly a property different from solidity than is that necessity which is opposed to liberty, different from the necessity whose existence is universally established above. All then that Mr. Hume establishes is the bare fact that agents really exist ; but whether they enjoy freedom or labour under necessity, his mode of philosophizing could not enable him to determine.

In order to account for the obvious phenomena of human agency therefore, Mr. Hume was under the necessity of abandoning his own principle and neglecting his own conclusions. He admits that, in one sense, man enjoys freedom, namely, when he has the power of acting according to the determinations of his own will.

Did a man desire to remove a load which, on trial, he finds himself perfectly able to carry off, he is allowed to be free; but did the burden prove quite an overmatch for his physical strength, it must, on the same principle, be granted that he labours under a real necessity. The distinction here is obvious. The two supposed states of the agent are directly in contrast; and if the one is necessity, the other can be nothing but liberty. In the former, by the exertion of a superior strength, he carries his will into effect; in the latter, through weakness, his effort is overcome and his volition frustrated. It would be perfectly ridiculous to confound two conditions of the agent so diametrically opposed under one name, either liberty or necessity, from the circumstance that, in some other respect, they admit of being classed together. With respect to the agent, they are in direct contrast; and as it is with reference to him that they are to be considered, they must be distinguished and expressed by different terms. On Mr. Hume's principle, however, this cannot be done. He investigates something common to voluntary agents with brute matter, and so far as the above results are thus common, they do not admit of being distinguished. On the principles of mechanical philosophy, the one result is as necessary as the other. The natural philosopher would estimate the muscular power of the man and weigh the loads, and on

the principle of dynamics, would justly consider both events as coming under the same universal law of physical necessity or causation ; and view the man in the different situations, both with respect to his physical power and the absolute certainty of the results, as a strictly necessary agent. It matters not how the mechanical force is produced, whether by the law of gravitation or by the volition and muscular effort of the voluntary agent ; so far as it is common to man with brute unintelligent matter, and with respect to the absolute certainty of the results, there can be no possible distinction.

Wherein then consists the striking difference between the two situations above supposed ? Not it is plain in any conceivable difference in the physical power, nor yet in any possible uncertainty in the results ; but simply in the circumstance that, in one instance, the will of the agent is frustrated, and in the other, it is carried into effect—and this constitutes the peculiar liberty of a voluntary agent. But brute matter has no will ; and it is utterly absurd therefore, from such a source, to seek any information respecting human liberty or necessity.

We leave then the Author of the Treatise on Human Nature in the undisputed possession of the principle of universal philosophical necessity, that is, that nothing exists without a cause, which, if they choose, we may further explain by adding

that of his disciple Dr. Priestley, that the same cause, in similar circumstances, cannot produce different effects ; and we retain the question of human liberty entire and untouched.

To investigate this subject, we must abandon the principle of Mr. Hume, and have recourse to the sounder philosophy of Lord Bacon. The great principles of the inductive philosophy are, that we can know things only so far as we observe the properties of the things themselves, and that we must admit the existence of nothing which is not observed and known as a matter of fact. On these principles the human mind itself must become the subject of observation. By consciousness, we must ascertain the nature of volition ; and by a careful and extensive induction, we must discover what is the sort of liberty which the will, or rather as Mr. Locke justly says, the human agent is capable of enjoying. We must then by the same means, discover how far this freedom is actually possessed, and whether or not, in some instances, it is subject to limitations. All this, it is plain, can be effected only by the vigilant exercise of consciousness, and by the careful examination and comparison of acknowledged mental phenomena.

Pursuing then the inquiry in this manner, we take it as the matter of fact which constitutes

the ground of the inquiry, that man exists as a voluntary agent, that is, a being who regulates his mechanical actions by his volitions, and the first and most obvious sort of liberty possessed by man in this character, is the power of acting or not acting according to the determination of his own will. In this it has been maintained that the whole of human liberty consists. And it is indeed a universal truth that man, when free from compulsion and restraint, is in possession of such a freedom. This states nothing but the fact that he is a voluntary agent, which we conceive to be a being whose volitions regulate his actions ; and experience proves that they do so as certainly as any physical cause produces its wonted effect. But that this should constitute the whole of human freedom is, at first sight, exposed to the same objection as Mr. Hume's doctrine of causation being the necessity of voluntary or moral agents.—It is something too general and not peculiar to man. Physical liberty, as that of which we are now speaking is usually called, but as it should more appropriately be termed animal or voluntary liberty, is enjoyed not only by men in possession of all their faculties, but by idiots and by the inferior animals down to the lowest species endowed with the power only of spontaneous motion. *A priori* then it might be concluded that the freedom peculiar to

man, as an intelligent and moral agent, must be something additional to this animal liberty, which is common to him with the lowest in the scale of the brutal creation.

It is true indeed, as Locke and other writers have justly observed, that this is the only liberty which properly belongs to the will, and that any other is not that of man considered as a voluntary, but as a rational and moral agent. In any further investigation therefore, we consider man not merely as acting according to the determinations of his will, but as possessed of higher powers which regulate his volition, in like manner as his volitions regulate his actions. The question is no longer that of the liberty of the *will* strictly taken, but of the liberty of the *man* possessed of powers of a higher order. As we ascend in the scale of being, the inquiry becomes, of course, more specific. Hume's philosophical necessity or liberty, as in truth it might as well be called, for it includes both, comprehends all things animate and inanimate. Animal liberty regards mere animals or rational beings considered as such ; but the liberty which we now seek, belongs exclusively to rational and moral agents.

To conduct this investigation on sound principles, we have just, as formerly, to take it as the matter of fact, that man *is* a moral agent, and to

ascertain the nature or essential properties of such a being. On the same principle then that a man, as an animal or voluntary agent, is considered free when he is physically able to act according to his will, but to lie under necessity, when from weakness or irresistible opposition he is unable to act upon his volition ; he must, as a moral agent, be held to enjoy freedom, when he regulates the determinations of his will according to the decisions of his understanding. This power, it may be remarked, is very different from what has been termed the self-determining power of the will. The supposition of such a power is absurd or, at best, unmeaning ; for in one class of instances, it can signify nothing but the fact that the will *is* determined ; and in another, it involves the absurdity of supposing a man to will and not to will the same thing simultaneously. Neither is the present question, whether the man does not in every instance regulate his will by motives ; for this is another fact which, as shall afterwards appear, simply states the truth, either that man is a rational being or a voluntary agent, according to the sense in which the term *motive* is employed. Admitting the universality of the influence of motives, our present question is, whether the human agent can determine his will by the motive which he judges right, advantageous upon the

whole or suitable to the circumstances in which he acts.*

Between this and animal liberty it is interest-

* "By the liberty of a moral agent," says Dr. Reid, "I understand a power over the determinations of his own will." *Essay iv. chap. i.* This power this sound and judicious philosopher very properly styles moral liberty. Leibnitz, though a necessitarian, entertains similar views. His account of liberty is so just and elegant that I may be allowed in this place to make the quotation. La liberté du fait consiste ou dans la puissance de vouloir comme il faut ; ou dans la puissance de faire ce qu'on veut. • •

La liberté de vouloir est encore prise en deux sens differens. L'un est quand on l'oppose à l'imperfection ou à l'usage de l'esprit qui est une coaction ou contrainte, mais interne comme cela qui vient des passions. L'autre sens a lieu quand on oppose la liberté à la nécessité. Dans le premier sens, les Stoïciens disoient que le sage seul est libre ; et en effet on n'a point l'esprit libre quand il est occupé d'une grande passion ; car on ne peut point vouloir alors comme il faut, c'est à dire, avec la deliberation qui est requise. C'est ainsi que Dieu seul est parfaitement libre, et que les esprits créés ne le sentent que à mesure qu'ils sont au dessus des passions. Et cette liberté regarde proprement notre entendement, *L'Entendement Humain, Liv. ii. chap. 21, § 8.*

"Free agency consists either in the power of willing what is right, or in the power of doing what we will. The liberty of willing is again taken in two different senses. The one is, when they contrast it with that compulsion or constraint which arises from the passions within (disallowed passions of course) ; the other when they contrast it with necessity (philosophical necessity or causation). In the first sense, the Stoicks maintained that the wise man alone is free : and surely the mind is not free when it is hurried away by the violence of passion ; for at that time one cannot will as he ought, that is, as his deliberate judgment approves. Thus God alone is completely free ; and created minds are free only in so far as they are superior to their passions. This freedom regards properly the understanding (that is, not the voluntary but the moral being)." This is the true account of human agency, and just what we are here endeavouring to illustrate ;

By the power to do as we see fit, called free.

ing to observe the analogy. When in the exercise of physical power a man is able to execute his volition, he is rightly said to enjoy animal or physical freedom; and when, in like manner, in the exercise of moral power, consisting in desire and feeling, he is able to will in the manner he judges right, he is in possession of moral liberty. The former is power to act in consequence of a determination of will; the latter is power to will in consequence of a decision of judgment. In instances of necessity of either sort, the case is just the reverse. We are under animal necessity, when from the resistance of a superior physical force, we are unable to act as we will; but we labour under moral necessity, if, in any instance, from the presence of feeling of which our judgment disapproves, we are unable to resolve to act in the manner which we consider right or advantageous. In both species of necessity, there is opposition which we are unable to overcome. In animal necessity, it is offered from without; in moral, it arises within, from feelings and desires which the conscience condemns. All liberty therefore is the enjoyment of power; necessity is the result of weakness. And as in the physical world there is no distinction more obvious and better understood than that of strength and weakness, it is easy, by observing the like distinc-

though this able metaphysician did not always distinctly perceive the extent of his own principle. The liberty opposed to causation he properly rejects as absurd and contradictory.

tion in the moral department of our nature, to form a clear idea of moral liberty and necessity. And let it be observed, that important as is the distinction of weak and strong in the material world, it involves no consequences in any respect so momentous as the similar distinction in the moral. On moral liberty and necessity depend innocence or guilt, with all their happy or baneful effects in the present life, and all the momentous and awful consequences in the future.*

Beyond the point to which we have now come the question of liberty and necessity should not perhaps, in strict propriety, be carried; for it is only as an animal or moral agent that man exhibits any transitive acts of power, to which alone liberty properly belongs. But were the inquiry to be pushed further, man is to be considered purely as an intelligent and contemplative being, and a similar distinction is observed as in the physical and moral departments of his nature. As the essential attribute of such a being is to

* The reader will scarcely be in danger of being misled by what is usually called *moral necessity*; which takes place when the will is determined in whatever manner, and is plainly just philosophical necessity or causation. Every volition, of course, is, in this sense necessary, that is, in other words, it has a cause; but the true question of liberty and necessity, as Dr. Clarke, in his remarks on Collins, justly though somewhat obscurely shows, is whether the intelligent being himself is the cause or some other principle of which he disapproves. To have confounded these two opposite states of the moral agent, one of which is real necessity, under the general name of moral necessity, has been the cause of much of the confusion in which this interesting subject is involved. See more of this in the remarks on Edwards.

perceive truth, he must be esteemed free when he perceives things to be as they really are ; but to lie under intellectual necessity when, from mental weakness or the derangement of his faculties, he mistakes falsehood for truth. There are here, as in the cases above, two conditions of the intelligent being of an opposite nature ; and if one is confessedly necessity, the other must be liberty. As animal and moral freedom is the exercise of physical and moral power, so intellectual power is the ground of intellectual liberty, and of course the opposite state of mental weakness or ignorance must be considered intellectual necessity. The same contrast is found in the human agent as an animal, a moral and an intelligent being, and if the propriety of the distinction be admitted in the first respects, it cannot be denied in the last.

Viewing then human liberty or necessity in these three aspects, we exhaust the whole subject ; for there is no need to imitate Mr. Hume and consider man as purely material, possessing properties in common with inanimate matter. Animal liberty regards him as an agent, possessing merely the power of voluntary motion ; intellectual liberty views him as an intelligent and rational being ; while moral liberty respects him as uniting both these, in one complex nature, and constituting a moral agent.

Thus it appears that the whole inquiry, respecting liberty and necessity, is reduced to a

simple question of fact, is man such an agent as has been described, or is he not? And how indeed should it be otherwise? An agent is a voluntary or intelligent cause; and if man really be such a cause, and not merely a passive subject, he enjoys freedom co-extensive with his power, limited indeed in degree, as that of all finite beings must be, but not different in kind from that of the Almighty, whose sovereignty can consist in nothing more than the power of acting, in all things, according to his own good pleasure. If a voluntary agent do as he will, what other liberty can he conceive or desire? If a moral agent fix his volition as he judges right, or most advantageous and proper, why should he will otherwise, and how can he will better? And if he judge true what is really true, and right what is really right, can the infinite understanding even of the Deity, in the given instance, do more? There is here no necessity, as shall afterwards be more fully shown, but that implied in the fact of existence—that things cannot be and not be simultaneously. In this fact the whole inquiry respecting liberty is involved. *Is* man really a sentient, intelligent, and moral agent? If he is so, his freedom may admit of augmentation in degree, but in kind it is already perfect, for it is similar to that of the all-perfect Creator, with whose moral image man was endowed. If, on the other hand, he were not an agent, but a

purely passive subject, as when, for instance, by the opposition of a superior physical force, his agency is restrained and he is unable to carry his purpose into effect ; he would then, without question, being in a state quite the reverse of liberty, be truly enthralled by a real necessity. Such then being the plain truth to be ascertained, the subject of inquiry is as distinct and definite as any fact in the material universe ; and, by distinguishing the different agencies possessed by man, it will not be found difficult to answer the question as explicitly and satisfactorily as any other question of fact in chemistry or natural philosophy.

With regard to animal liberty, nothing requires to be said in the present Essay, since the subject is well understood and admits of little or no difference of opinion. Intellectual liberty too, so far as facts are concerned, needs little illustration, and is here introduced chiefly to afford an opportunity to obviate some objections, and remove some common misapprehensions respecting the relation of intelligence to free agency. The principal object of the Essay is to ascertain the reality of moral freedom ; to inquire whether, in any case or to what extent, man labours under moral necessity ; and to illustrate the leading principles and most striking mental processes, by which the human agent secures the enjoyment of the one, or is enthralled by the iron yoke of the other.

SECTION II.

MAN, IN THE EXERCISE OF HIS UNDERSTANDING,
USUALLY REGULATES THE DETERMINATIONS OF
HIS WILL ; THAT IS, ENJOYS MORAL FREEDOM.

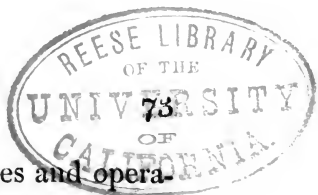
OUR first inquiry then being simply, whether man, in the exercise of his judgment, controls and regulates his own will, little detail is necessary by way of evidence. It is to be observed, however, in entering upon this part of the subject, that it is not the intention to establish any principle of universal application. All that can be attempted is merely to ascertain and illustrate a general law, supported by a multitude of facts, and leave it to be determined, in a subsequent section, whether or not this law admits of any exceptions.

That man then, in the exercise of his judgment, fixes, in a multitude of instances, the determinations of his own will, every one must be conscious and nobody denies. The merchant seeks the best market for his goods, because he judges it most for his advantage ;

while the man of principle prefers virtuous conduct to the commission of crime, because he judges it right. In all such cases, the judgment approves of a certain conduct and the will is determined according to its decision.

Nor is the influence of the understanding limited to the fixing of the volitions at first : it has the power of altering them after they have been determined. Nothing is more common than that a man who has resolved to act in a certain manner, on reviewing the reasons of his resolution, or on receiving additional information, changes his purpose, and determines to pursue a different or opposite conduct. Such facts form a considerable portion of the daily history of the human mind. To adopt a different resolution, to alter one's purpose, to change one's mind, are expressions of common occurrence ; and to any one, therefore who understands the meaning of the terms, it would be idle to present any lengthened induction to prove, that man possesses the power of fixing, modifying and changing the determinations of his own will, as he judges right, becoming, or most conducive to his interest.

These simple and well known truths then are all that are necessary to be determined ; and holding them as acknowledged matters of fact, admitted by all parties, nothing farther is necessary, in the present section, but to offer a few



remarks illustrative of the principles and operations of the mind which account for their production. And, in the first place, an analysis of volition will facilitate our future inquiries.

Mr. Locke seemed to think that desire and volition are states of mind essentially different, and, according to his own view, his opinion is not to be considered incorrect. Dr. Reid entered more fully into the examination of the subject, and showed that the object of volition must, in every case, be some action of our own, or something which we believe to be in our own power and to depend upon our own will; but he did not free himself from the mistake of conceiving that, in certain circumstances, a thing may be an object of volition without at the same time being an object of desire. Dr. Brown has corrected this mistake, by demonstrating that, in every case, the object of desire or, where opposing desires co-exist, the object of the predominant desire and of volition are the same, and that volition is just another name for all those desires which are accompanied with a belief that we shall carry them into effect. "Volition," says he, "may be said to be a complex feeling, inasmuch as it is desire combined with belief of the immediate sequence of the object desired."* In giving this account

* Inquiry into the Relation of Cause and Effect, p. 36. See note A.

of volition, he had reference to those transient determinations of will which give rise to muscular motion, but it is not necessary thus to limit the definition by the use of the epithet *immediate*, or to consider volition as directing merely our own physical powers. Any power of which wealth, rank or character gives us the command, is as truly the instrument of our will as a hand or a foot. The despot who leads forth his armies of obsequious slaves to overthrow cities and desolate empires, as truly wills these events as to move a finger or change an attitude. Volition therefore may be defined the desire of any object which we believe we shall be able to obtain by means of any power which is subject to our will. When we desire to obtain any object or to perform any action, as soon as we believe that the action will really be performed by us, or view its performance as a matter of future fact, the will is determined, and our feeling becomes a volition and no longer simple desire; or when, on the other hand, we view the performance of an action as possible, or as a future event which, if we will, we may bring about, as soon as the desire to perform it becomes predominant, the state of mind which is experienced is a determination of the will. Volition therefore, as Dr. Brown justly observes, is a complex feeling, and, of course, is different from mere desire as a whole. Desire alone is always an uneasy feeling, but when it

becomes a volition, by being attended with the belief of the attainment of its object, it always loses some of its former uneasiness, and in most cases, becomes agreeable. This is the general character of all volitions. To follow their impulse, in preference to any other desire, is at the time the most agreeable, and is felt to be most productive of present satisfaction.

It is not necessary, indeed, that our belief of the future attainment of the desired object should always amount to absolute certainty, for this in comparatively few instances can be experienced. Any degree of probability of our future performance of the action, combined with any degree of desire, or in cases of conflicting desires, with the one of them which in any degree predominates, constitutes a feeble volition ; which increases in strength both as the certainty increases and as the desire becomes more intense, till it amount to the most determined resolution. Hence, in estimating the strength of a volition or purpose, we must take into account not only the intensity of the desire, but the degree of probability with which the individual looks forward to the attainment of his object. That volition is consequently the strongest which results from the most intense desire, united with the most absolute certainty of the deed. But if either of these elements are removed, if, for instance, there is no degree of probability that we shall accomplish the ob-

ject of desire, a determination of will becomes impossible. Hence arise many of the most striking and curious phenomena in the history of the human mind ; and the numerous artifices which are employed to shake a man's resolution, either by cooling his desire of the object, or diminishing the probability of its attainment.

The nature of motives is the next subject which requires some illustration.

Respecting the nature of motives, familiar as the idea is, we are not unfrequently in danger of being misled, partly by the use of metaphorical language, but chiefly from the artifices which theorists have been induced, perhaps unwittingly, to employ in order to support their favourite notions. The term motive has two meanings in ordinary language. It signifies the perception of something addressed to any susceptibility which directly or indirectly is the source of desire and hence of volition, as when it is said that money was the man's motive to commit the crime ; or it signifies the feeling actually produced by the perception of such an object, as when we say that the love of gold is the motive which actuates the miser or the thief. It is not the external object viewed in itself which constitutes a motive, as the language in the first illustration might seem to imply, but the object addressed to some susceptibility of desire, as known and perceived by us. Were these two

classes of motives to be distinguished by appropriate names, we might term those of the one class *intellectual*, and those of the other *sentient* motives.

Hence we are furnished with a very simple and beautiful solution of the much disputed question, whether the will is always determined by motives, or when motives of an opposite tendency are felt, by the strongest. If the term motive is to be taken in the first sense, to be determined by motives just means that man is a percipient and moral being, and if, in any instance, he is not determined by the strongest motives, he then acts an irrational part, and having his will fixed without the approbation of his judgment, labours under moral necessity. Whether he ever does so shall be afterwards determined. If the word be employed in the second sense, to say that a man is determined by motives just states the fact, that man is a voluntary agent. Motive and desire are then synonymous; and since desire was found to be an essential element of volition, where there is no motive, there can be no determination of the will; and when conflicting desires or motives exist, the strongest, of course, involves the volition, otherwise man must be conceived capable of willing against his own will, which is an obvious contradiction. In this sense then, it is universally true, that the will is determined by the strongest motive, for the opposite supposition

evidently destroys the nature of a voluntary agent.

With regard to the various sorts of motives by which the human mind is influenced, all the susceptibilities of our constitution, it is plain, are directly or indirectly the source of desire and hence of motives. The senses, the appetites, the affections, the passions, the moral and religious feelings, are all, in their turn, excited and prompt us to action. Many of them, as was just hinted, do not directly influence the will, that is, constitute motives in the second sense of that term ; for in this sense nothing but desire or aversion, which necessarily implies desire, constitutes an element of volition. The feeling of pain, for instance, which we experience by means of the sense of touch has power to produce volition only by exciting that desire to escape the uneasiness by which it is always accompanied. So it is with our appetites and passions and feelings generally. The desire to escape or to obtain the object by which they are excited is that which directly fixes the determination of the will or, more strictly speaking, is itself the principal element of volition.

Hence, in estimating the power which any sensation, appetite, or passion possesses to influence the will, we must consider not the strength and vividness of the feeling itself, but of the desire of which it is the parent. The strength of

every desire indeed is always in proportion to the strength of the feeling from which it results ; but the various feelings, relatively considered, possess the power of producing desire in very different degrees. A regular and most beautiful gradation seems to pervade all the feelings of the human constitution. Those which depend most directly upon the judgment, such as the feeling of moral approbation, will be found to possess the greatest relative power to produce desire and hence to fix volition. The less any feeling depends upon the understanding, the less becomes its influence over the will, till we come to the appetites and sensations which last, of all our feelings, exhibit relatively the least degree of power over our voluntary determinations.

Any one who has reflected on his own mind while enduring corporal pain, or who has found it necessary to submit to a painful surgical operation, must be acquainted with this constitutional law. In such circumstances he may have observed, that while the desire which induced him voluntarily to submit to suffering was, of course, far more powerful, with respect to its influence over the will, than the natural desire to escape present pain, the feeling which gave birth to the predominant desire was much less vivid and intense than the painful sensation by which it was opposed. The apprehension of some future evil, or the desire of some remote and perhaps

uncertain happiness, enables a man of ordinary fortitude steadily to encounter and calmly to endure the most excruciating sensations, which, as feelings, are vastly more vivid and intense than those conflicting motives by which they are triumphantly overcome. To this law of our sentient constitution, Mr. Hume seems to allude in his Discourse on the Passions, when he speaks of what is called reason in a popular sense, being nothing but a general and calm passion, and justly conceives that what is usually termed strength of mind consists in the prevalence of the calm passions over the violent.

By this law of our nature, the wisdom and benevolence of the Creator has admirably provided at once for our preservation as animals and our moral freedom as responsible agents. Being exposed to numerous dangers from without, it was necessary, for self-preservation, that the sensations of bodily pain should be sufficiently vivid to guard us against external injuries; and, accordingly, there is no ordinary feeling—for we do not speak of remorse, despair and others of a similar nature, which virtuous minds should never experience—which is capable of greater intensity than corporal pain. Had sensations of this class possessed the same relative strength in the excitement of desire, and in the determination of the will as the feelings which arise wholly from within, the human agent, it is obvious, would

have been reduced to a condition more unhappy than that of the brutes, and have been placed at the mercy of the wantonness or villany of every one who might feel disposed to injure him. By the infliction of a little bodily pain, he could have been compelled at any time to violate the most sacred dictates of his conscience, and have been hurried into the commission of the most fatal crimes. By the influence of the law under consideration, he escapes so unhappy a condition, and retains his moral liberty uncontrolled and superior to the violence of men. The patriot can despise the dungeon and the gibbet; and the martyr, regardless of the faggot and the wheel, can smile at the demoniacal ingenuity of the persecutor. And it is not in such circumstances that the strength of the principle is seen to best advantage. The young American Indians, we are told, with no stronger motives than those called forth by the playful humours of childhood, cheerfully rival each other in the patient endurance of the most intense bodily suffering.

Such being the important law regarding the relative strength of motives, let us now briefly illustrate the process by which the intelligent and rational being regulates his will by means of their influence.

Though many of the human motives are common to man with the brutes, and would lead to action, without the superintendence of a higher

faculty, the cases in which they do not come under the cognisance of the understanding are certainly much less numerous than some philosophers have seemed to believe. In all the ordinary actions of life, it cannot be doubted that the conscience is active, approving or condemning the various motives by which mankind are prompted to fix their voluntary determinations. In many instances, when the statement, with apparent justice, might be called in question, the actions are familiar, the motives have been long approved and are acted on with the fullest knowledge and most entire confidence of their propriety.

When a man is stimulated by any desire of which he approves, he finds it agreeable to yield to its impulse. If it is an appetite or any other feeling simply natural, without assuming the character of virtue or vice, it is indulged without exciting any other feeling to augment or diminish its intensity; and the strength of the volition consequent upon it, and the amount of pleasure derived from its gratification, are in proportion to the intensity of the desire. This is one of the simplest cases of approved volition.

When motives of a contrary tendency are experienced, the process becomes more complex. Suppose two opposite motives of a prudential nature, but both morally right, to solicit the will, the individual considers the advantages or

disadvantages attending each of the proposed measures, compares them together, judges on which side the advantages preponderate, and determines, in consequence, to act in the manner which he conceives most conducive to his interest. In such a case, the lawful desire of wealth, of pleasure, or of honour is the motive which solicits the will, and which might impel the man to action without any decision of the judgment; but, though the judgment determines only the best means of obtaining the most complete gratification, since it approves of both conflicting motives as morally right, the resolution which is ultimately taken obtains, in every respect, the sanction of the understanding.

But the finest instance of the power which the understanding possesses to direct the will, is exhibited in a virtuous mind, exposed to the temptation to commit an action which it judges morally wrong. The conscience, as formerly said, is a complex principle, composed of a perception of the understanding and the susceptibility of the vivid, deep and solemn feelings, which, in uncorrupted minds, are awakened by the perception or consciousness of right and wrong in moral conduct. By the perception, it is able to take cognizance of its objects; by the feeling, it is calculated to influence and regulate the will. In all instances of appetite, sensation and passion in general, the object is without, and affects the

feelings of the man whether he chooses or not ; but the direct objects of the conscience are the agent's own feelings, motives or desires and volitions, and hence, in regulating his will by its perceptions, he is acting wholly from himself. In this consists the grand difference between the human agent and the brute. The latter, on perceiving an external object, must act on the impulse of the feeling which it excites, and has no means of otherwise fixing his volition : the former, on the excitement of a feeling from without, contemplates it as right or wrong, and, by the constitution of his nature, the powerful emotions of conscience are awakened, by which he is able to check the rising desire, and hold back his will from the incipient purpose. The unworthy desire is the restraining motive, in the first sense which is given of that word ; the feeling of disapprobation, excited by the consciousness of the unlawful desire, is the opposing motive, in the second sense in which that term is used. Thus it is that, in a mind endowed with the faculty of conscience, every vicious feeling carries along with it its own antidote, and the motive or desire which tempts to sin is the very motive by which it is itself resisted and destroyed. This is the admirable provision to secure the freedom of the moral agent. When assailed by temptation, a moral power is always ready to support the decisions of his understanding ; and,

in the citadel of his own heart, the moral agent, authoritatively approving and condemning the various emotions as they arise, keeps secure possession of his soul and maintains his authority within, successfully resists the allurements and violence of temptation without, and vindicates his right to exercise supreme control over all his own desires, volitions and actions.

These simple instances of volition may be, at present, sufficient to illustrate the manner in which the will is at first determined; and we now proceed to offer some remarks respecting the process by which the purpose is altered, when it has already been taken.

Every one must have experienced, that a change of will is generally attended with uneasiness, and, in some instances, with extreme reluctance. Let a man have long cherished some favourite scheme, in the success of which he has been accustomed to conceive his interest deeply involved, and in support of which all his sanguine feelings have been long engaged; and let a more discerning friend succeed in convincing him, that the execution of his projected undertaking might be hazardous or impracticable, its consequences useless or perhaps pernicious, and that to act in a different manner will certainly, in all respects, be more beneficial; and he will experience the struggle to which I allude. In such circumstances, many men, whose

feelings have not been sufficiently inured to submit to their judgment, would find little difficulty, in opposition to the conviction of the imprudence and dangerous consequences of the attempt, and encouraged by little more than the bare possibility of success, to persist in their purpose, till failure might teach them moderation. But let a man even of the most powerful and best disciplined mind be placed in such a situation, and he will feel that the determination of the will does not immediately and without a struggle, follow the conviction of the judgment. He will experience a strong propensity to cling to every argument and probability in favour of his purpose, and to shut out from view every consideration which would tend to alter it; and it will not be till after repeated struggles with himself, that he will cheerfully embrace a measure which he cannot but conceive more advantageous than that which he abandons.

In cases of this nature, instead of what has been unmeaningly termed the self-determining power of the will, the human agent, in the exercise of a superior power, does a sort of violence to his own volition, and forces his will to adopt resolutions to which it was most obstinately opposed. It is plain too, that were the understanding the only power independent of the will, such changes of purpose could take place only when some new information or some forgotten

and neglected truth was forced upon his attention from without; but he could never, of himself, alter a resolution when once taken. The author of our nature has wisely provided against such an abridgement of human liberty, by furnishing the mind with another faculty, in a great measure free and independent of the will. This principle is what is usually explained under the title of the Association of Ideas.

Without disputing with Mr. Locke whether or not thinking be essential to mind, it is granted by all, as a matter of fact, that, so far as we are conscious, the thinking principle is incessantly active. The doctrine of the Association of Ideas is nothing more than the statement of this fact, in connection with the additional fact, that the mind pursues its ideas in a certain order, according to certain relations between the ideas themselves, or certain feelings in the mind respecting the associated ideas.

It is of little moment to our present purpose which enumeration of the laws of Association be adopted—whether that of Dr. Brown, who divides them into primary and secondary laws of suggestion; or whether, allowing Dr. Brown's secondary laws a more important place, to which they are justly entitled, we divide them into two classes, which may be named the *intellectual* and *sentient* laws of Association—the former including all the associating relations among things

themselves as perceived by us ; the latter all the feelings of our own minds which have reference to the objects of thought, and which therefore direct the train of ideas. This latter class of laws depends on the well known fact, that whatever interests the affections engages the attention. We think most on what we love best. Hence every feeling and emotion of our nature draws the attention towards its object, and exercises a powerful influence in directing and modifying the current of thought.

This class of laws, it may be remarked, was strangely neglected by writers on association, till Dr. Brown took more particular notice of them under the name of the secondary laws of suggestion. That acute philosopher, though he has the merit of having been the first writer who gave them, to a considerable degree, the place to which they are entitled, does not appear to have perceived the great extent of their influence. In moral questions, indeed, they are the only laws which deserve notice ; for it is to them that we owe all the voluntary power which we exercise over the understanding. On this principle, too, depend abstraction, attention, and other powers usually enumerated by mental philosophers.*

Leaving, however, the principle of association to be elsewhere illustrated, the fact of the mind's

* See Note B.

unceasing activity is undisputed. Though, by the admirable wisdom of our Creator, the will possesses the power of modifying and directing the current of thought so far as is necessary for our improvement and comfort, the mind continues to pursue its train of ideas whether we will or not, and often in direct opposition to our most ardent wishes. How often does the thinking principle recur to ideas from which we would most gladly escape, and which we cannot but consider the disturbers of our peace. The guilty know the force of the principle; and the virtuous man, when exposed to temptation, is aware how helpless he frequently must have been, had the train of his thought depended upon his will. When already his better judgment was obscured by the rising emotions of passion, and his better purposes completely shaken, the unwearied activity of thought, like a guardian angel, has presented to his consideration some neglected truth, and thereby awakened a new set of feelings, which enabled him triumphantly to resist the almost successful temptation, and resolutely to hold fast his integrity. The villain, in like manner, hastening to execute a criminal purpose, sometimes feels his resolutions unexpectedly shaken and his arm unnerved; and is filled with remorse at the conception of the deed which but a little before he was eager to commit. In all such cases, it is plain that the thinking principle acts

without the concurrence of the will, and by its peculiar power effects a change in the voluntary determinations.

It is usually taught by writers on this subject, that the thinking and rational powers are, at least to a certain extent, passive. This mistake seems to have arisen by paying attention too exclusively to mechanical action, and has been favoured by the unnatural division of the powers of the human mind into intellectual and active. "Action," says Dr. Beattie, "implies motion." If this indeed were universally true, the intellectual powers of course cannot be classed with the active; for motion is no property of intellect and volition. But this principle, it is obvious, regards only animal action, which necessarily implies motion, without including the activity of spiritual agents. Whenever we allow the existence of spiritual and moral beings, we must extend the induction, and consider the sort of action which is peculiar to such agents, before it can be admitted, as an axiom in moral science, that action always implies motion.

An action is properly an effect produced by an agent. Wherever therefore there is an effect produced there is action. In order to ascertain then, whether the intellectual powers are active or not, we have only to consider whether they produce any effect. Now every one knows that

certain views of truth produce certain feelings and fix certain volitions, as surely and uniformly as those volitions produce mechanical action. Here then we have an effect produced by the intellectual as well as one by the sentient powers; and why should we term the one active more than the other? Each is followed, with equal certainty and uniformity, by its peculiar effect. The thinking and judging principle produces volition; the volition produces animal motion; and it were as reasonable to seek moral feeling in the hand or judgment in the foot, in order to render it capable of motion, as it were to seek motion from the understanding in order to pronounce it an active power. Its activity consists in the excitement of feeling, in like manner as that of the will consists in the production of muscular motion. There is no room then for declaring the one class of powers active in opposition to the other, for both are equally active in the production of their proper effects. And were we disposed to make such a distinction among the faculties of the mind, the active powers, as they are usually called, should in reality be considered passive, and the intellectual active. Volition in every instance is produced, either by sensation and appetite, which arise wholly from the state of the body altogether independently both of the will and the understanding, or from the perception of an object addressed to some susceptibility

of feeling or passion. In either case, volition is wholly an effect and as such is purely passive. It does indeed produce another effect in the muscular motions of the body, with reference to which, it is a cause, and is to be considered active ; but as it is passive with respect to its own production, its action is similar to that of a ball which communicates to another body the motion which itself has received. With respect to the intellectual powers by which it is produced, it is altogether a passive effect, and they alone are truly active. The natural division of the human faculties then, with reference to the mind itself, is into active or intellectual powers and passive susceptibilities, among which are included all the sensations, feelings, desires and volitions.

The intellectual powers then exhibit a two-fold activity ; they produce volition in the same manner that volition is the cause of action, and are besides possessed of an activity peculiar to themselves. This peculiar activity deserves the attention of the inquirer respecting liberty. The argument which the fatalist has sometimes employed, as if the activity within were produced by the influence of objects without, by means of sensation, is utterly undeserving of notice. The senses, it is true, are the original source of the ideas with which the intellectual powers are employed ; and hence it is sometimes insinuated, that sensation is the cause of thought. Since the

doctrine of innate ideas is not to be supported, there may be a period previous to which the thinking powers are in a state of inaction, in which they might for ever remain, were they not aroused by sensation. But even then, it is needless to say, sensation is only the object of thought, and the occasion of mental activity, not the cause. Were there not a mind to feel and to think, in vain might the visual ray strike the eye, or the fragrant effluvia assail the olfactory nerves. The dog which accompanied Sir Isaac Newton might mark the fall of the apple as quickly and distinctly as its master ; but it was the mind of the philosopher alone which could take the hint respecting the universality of gravitation, and by its application unfold the delightful harmony of the seemingly discordant universe. And after objects of thought have been obtained by sensation, we are conscious that the mind never ceases to think. Sensation then only introduces new ideas, and diverts the current of thought, by calling away the attention of the mind to external objects, but does not necessarily increase the mental activity. Though sensation were, at any period, to be altogether obstructed, the rudest mind, with the scantiest stock of ideas, might be not less busy than when prompted by the most vivid sensation ; and certainly would never entirely cease to think.

Hence then the thinking powers are entitled

to be considered active, not only on the same ground as the volitions, but also on account of their own peculiar activity, exhibited in the ceaseless current of ideas. This activity of thought is an ultimate fact in the philosophy of mind; and is not to be explained, like action and volition, by a reference to any higher faculty as its cause. It is a pure fact of existence. While the mind exists, it thinks, must ever be esteemed an axiom in mental philosophy. It is not so with regard to feeling or volition. Man is not always in motion; and his desires are frequently at rest, and leave the mind void of any present purpose; but the wakeful thinking principle ceases not from its wonted action. Like the Father of spirits, by whose inspiration it was at first bestowed, it slumbereth not nor sleepeth. And as it seems to depend on the spiritual essence of the human soul, there is no room to doubt, that when the head by which it perceives, and the heart by which it feels, are mouldering in dust, it will return still vigorous and active to God who gave it.

It is this ceaseless activity of thought then, combined with the judgment, which secures to man the power of altering his own voluntary determinations. This power could not be enjoyed to any great extent, merely by the exercise of the understanding, which judges of the right and wrong, the advantageous and disadvantageous,

of objects, when brought before it, without being able to call forth those ideas which are not already present. And never would the will, when once determined, effect its own change, by directing the attention to considerations unfavourable to itself. The active principle of thought alone is able to change the purpose, by bringing into view all the facts, arguments and considerations, connected with the proposed measure, and, by this means, giving the intelligent agent an opportunity to examine the whole case, and judge truly what is right or advantageous, and fix his volition accordingly. Association thus does for a man a service often rendered him by a better informed and more prudent friend. When, on a sudden emergency, or under the influence of passion, he has been hurried into a resolution which, were all the circumstances considered, he could not approve, the active principle of thought comes to his aid, brings some neglected considerations into view, awakens new feelings and desires, and hence leads him to reconsider his former reasons, and finally to change his purpose! In certain instances of this sort, in vain may the volition struggle to maintain itself, by its tendency to direct the attention exclusively to the arguments in its own favour, and to exclude the opposite considerations; the principle of association, notwithstanding all opposition, forces new reasons and neglected truths upon the attention,

and constrains the judgment to alter its former decision, and give a new direction to the will which was already decided.

Thus the thinking and judging principles are the source of the power by which the human agent controls his volitions, and asserts his moral freedom. Except those two faculties, all the powers of the mind are, strictly speaking, passive susceptibilities. As animal motion depends on volition, so volition, when most independent, is the result of the thinking principle. Both the thinking and judging faculties, or, as Dr. Brown would express them, simple and relative suggestion, are independent of desire and volition. The man thinks whether he wills it or not ; and the judgment is ever ready to pronounce its decisions on the objects which simple suggestion presents. It is this circumstance that renders them adequate to be the governing principles of a moral and responsible agent. The brutes are prompted to action by sensation and appetite, in the same manner as man ; but, being destitute of an understanding capable of perceiving moral distinctions, and hence, of controlling their desires and feelings, their volitions are regulated entirely by external circumstances, over which they have no control. It is not so with the human agent. He can contemplate the circumstances in which he is placed, judge what conduct is morally right or most for his advantage,

resolve to act in the manner his conscience approves, and defy the power of man and all created beings to force him from his purpose. The history of Christianity affords many illustrious examples of human power and of moral freedom. It was not without reason that the angel forbade the apostle to worship him, and there was no condescension in confessing his equality as a fellow servant—the human being, in the exercise of his conscience, acknowledges inferiority to none but the Creator.

SECTION III.

OF INTELLECTUAL LIBERTY.

IT is admitted, then, as a matter of fact, that the human agent, in the exercise of his understanding, has, in many instances, the power to change the determinations of his will, as well as to fix them at first. This power of changing the will, it is plain, can be enjoyed only within certain limits—in those cases, namely, in which the volition has been the result of partial knowledge, or of a mind under the undue influence of passion. When a resolution has been taken by an enlightened mind, in the deliberate exercise of its faculties, no change can be effected by means of the understanding. To retain his moral freedom, the man must then act according to his volition and cannot act otherwise. Hence an argument is derived against the existence of human liberty.

In entering upon this part of the investigation, it is necessary to premise that, although the facts now to be considered are universally acknowledged without difference of opinion, the

inquiry, regarding what we have termed the freedom of the understanding, is not to be considered any idle logomachy respecting the use of the term necessity. It is of some importance to true science to class things aright, and not to confound objects essentially different under the same term. All the sciences afford striking proofs of the pernicious consequences of such a mode of proceeding, and none more strikingly than the subject under consideration. By the improper use of the term necessity, and by confounding opposite things under that name, men have been led, and apparently with good reason, into the much more dangerous mistake of calling good evil and evil good; and hence have been involved in all the dreadful consequences of moral guilt. The perusal of the writings of the French sceptical school, and the consideration of the causes of the tragical scenes during the revolution in that country, will convince any one that it is not unimportant to settle the right meaning of the terms liberty and necessity, and deliver us from the unmeaning use of them. For as Dr. Brown well observes, "to remove a number of cumbrous words is, in many cases, all that is necessary to render distinctly visible, as it were to our very glance, truths which they and they only have been for ages hiding from our view."

Since the understanding, then, to resume our subject, perceives multitudes of truths to be as

they really are and cannot perceive them otherwise ; if, in those instances, the man regulates his will by the decisions of his judgment, he is no longer, it is contended, a free but a strictly necessary agent. The decision of his judgment and determination of his will depend on circumstances over which he has no command. By these circumstances the man's conduct is and must be determined with the most absolute certainty. He must inevitably judge, and will, and act in a certain manner. No choice nor alternative of conduct is left him. It is vain then, it is argued, to contend for human liberty. If the man act upon his judgment, he is shut up to a certain line of conduct as certainly and as unavoidably as if he were compelled to act under the irresistible law of physical necessity.

All the facts here stated are frankly admitted ; and it is granted that they do indeed prove a sort of necessity. But let us for a moment consider its nature. It is in truth nothing but the necessity which is implied in the proposition, a thing cannot be and not be at the same time ; that is, it is the simple fact of existence. While matter *exists*, it must be extended, figured and solid ; while grass *is* green, it must be green ; while the earth *revolves*, it must be in motion ; and, in like manner, while man remains an intelligent being, he must perceive truth to the extent of his knowledge. The very essence, as

known to us, of an intelligent and rational being is to perceive truth. To suppose a man indifferent with respect to the perception of all truth, is to conceive him to be no longer an intelligent being. When we say, therefore, that man perceives truth to be true, and of necessity cannot perceive it otherwise, we state nothing more than the simple fact, that man *is* an intelligent creature.

Mr. Hume's doctrine of necessity, we formerly saw, is the bare truth, that all the substances and accidents with which we are acquainted, derive their existence from some cause; that is, it is nothing but the fact of the universal prevalence of causation. With regard to substances, it states, that all those around us are created beings; with respect to actions, it affirms that every action implies an agent acting according to the attributes of his nature. The contrast of the first part of this necessity is self-existence, that is, uncaused, unbeginning existence, which belongs only to the Deity; who, in this sense, therefore, is the only free being in the universe. The last part, since we cannot conceive an accident without a subject, nor an action without an agent, has no contrast, unless we find it in the substantial forms of the school-men; who have the merit of having maintained the reality of something, not only non-existent but inconceivable and contradictory, and of having afforded a

fine specimen of words absolutely without meaning. The necessity of which we are now speaking, though different from Mr. Hume's, and in some respects opposite, is so much the more irrational. The mere fact of existence is necessity. The Deity, as being self-existent, is, in this sense, the most necessary of all beings. As an intelligent being, whose understanding and knowledge is infinite, and who, therefore, perfectly perceives all possible truths, and cannot but perceive them, he is placed under an infinitely greater degree of necessity than any of his finite intelligent creatures, who are necessary only in proportion to their intellectual power. The contrast of this necessity is non-existence. To deliver any being from the necessity of being what he is, or an intelligent being from the necessity of perceiving truth, he must be annihilated; and then, indeed, he will, in this sense, be perfectly free. Nothing is necessary respecting a non-entity. Deprive a man of his rational and moral faculties, and he will be indifferent to all truths not common to him with the brutes; but he will still be under the necessity of being a sentient and voluntary agent. Deprive him, again, of sensation and volition, and reduce him to mere matter, and he will be free from the necessity of feeling and of spontaneous motion; but he will still be under the greater necessity of being solid, extended and figured. Reduce him to a

nonentity, and he is completely free from all necessity. He will then be perfectly indifferent to truth, and will no longer be under any necessity to think, to judge, or to reason. But while an intelligent and rational mind really exists, he must be under the necessity of doing them all; that is, he must retain the high and glorious attributes which render him what he is, and in which consists all his capability of enjoying freedom. He cannot be and not be simultaneously.

Hence appears the ridiculous misconception and absurdity of the arguments which are occasionally urged against the existence of liberty, that to render man free "he must not be necessarily determined to assent to truth only—he must be indifferent to propositions notwithstanding any evidence for them—he must be able to reject what appears true to him and assent to what seems to him absurd—he must be capable of judging contrary to reason." Utterly absurd as such suppositions must appear, they are, however, not more inconsistent with the existence of man, as an intelligent being, than it is inconsistent with his existence, as a voluntary agent, to conceive that he can act without motives or in opposition to the strongest. Writers on both sides of the question of liberty and necessity are equally chargeable with the absurdity of maintaining contradictions. They have generally ne-

glected what should have constituted the preliminary question, the nature of the being respecting whose liberty they proposed to inquire. And hence, as might have been anticipated, the liberty of which they have dreamed has, at one time, supposed an intelligent being without intelligence; at another, a voluntary agent without volition.

It is altogether unreasonable, therefore, to consider the mere fact of existence necessity. Before any inquiry can be instituted respecting the necessity or liberty of any being, its existence must be admitted as a matter of fact, and then we may proceed to ascertain how far it enjoys liberty or labours under necessity. In the present Essay, therefore, we have assumed as the basis of our investigation, that man really is what he is, an intelligent and rational being, that is, that he perceives truth to be true, what is morally right to be right, and, in general, things to be as they really are.

This fact being admitted, and conducting the inquiry on the true and obvious principle which we have hitherto observed, namely, that the enjoyment of the power peculiar to the nature of the being is freedom, but that weakness is necessity; what is the liberty which belongs to the human understanding? Is the man free who, in the exercise of a sound judgment, perceives truth to be as it is, or he who from the weakness

or derangement of his intellectual faculties, judges true what is really false? Were a proposition of Euclid presented to an accomplished geometrician and to a man of weak mind, destitute of mathematical knowledge, which would enjoy intellectual freedom? Would it be he who is able to comprehend nothing about the matter, and who perhaps believes an absurdity; or he whose acute and unclouded intellect at once unravels all the intricacies of a perplexing diagram, traces out all its manifold relations, and quickly beholds the truth in all its force of demonstration? The answer cannot be mistaken. It were utterly absurd to reduce ourselves to the necessity of pronouncing weakness and ignorance free, by maintaining that the opposite condition of power and knowledge is necessity. If we will employ the contradistinctive terms, it is obvious to which of the states each of them must be assigned.

Lord Bacon understood perhaps more than he expressed by his celebrated maxim, Knowledge is power. Knowledge is not only power but freedom. Besides being true in augmenting our animal freedom by extending our control over physical nature, it is true also more directly in reference to the understanding itself. A man's intellectual liberty is exactly commensurate with his knowledge. With respect to what a man does not know, or, from want of capacity, cannot know, he is under necessity. The higher, there-

fore, a creature ascends in the scale of intelligent being, the greater becomes his capacity and the wider his sphere of liberty; the lower he descends the more is he subject to the stern control of necessity, till he sink to the irrational brute or the unconscious clod, which is altogether a necessary agent. The Deity alone, whose understanding is unlimited, is the only being possessed of absolutely unlimited freedom. As he is almighty in power, his physical freedom is unbounded; as he is perfectly holy, his moral liberty is infinite; so, since he is the father of lights, infinite in knowledge, his intellectual liberty is equally extensive. Hence, in the mighty chain of being, the nearer any creature approaches to his Creator, if we may be permitted to speak of finite approaching infinity, the wider is his sphere, and the greater his enjoyment of intellectual freedom.

A creature, however, it may be remarked, enjoys within his own sphere a perfect, though finite freedom of intellect, when he fully knows all the circumstances and relations in which he is placed, and on which his security and happiness depend. Man, therefore, in his primitive state of innocence, enjoyed a perfect, though, no doubt, a very limited freedom. He understood all the relations in which he was placed, as a moral being, and by which he required to regulate his conduct; and hence, by acting on his knowledge and discharging his duty, he pos-

sessed all the means of securing to himself the permanent enjoyment of complete felicity. By extending his sphere of knowledge, he might gratify curiosity, but could add nothing to his happiness; or, by extending it in a wrong direction, he might involve himself in ruin, as we know has been the case. Hence generally, in comparing the degree of freedom enjoyed by two beings of different orders, it must not be conceived that the additional amount of liberty enjoyed by the being of the higher order implies an equal amount of necessity imposed upon the other. All beings who enjoy freedom to the extent of their capacity, each within his own sphere, are possessed of a perfect liberty. The brute possesses all the freedom of which it is capable, when, within the inclosures of the meadow on which it grazes, it is able to gratify all its appetites and desires; and it would be absurd to say, that because it does not enjoy moral freedom, it therefore labours under moral necessity. Both moral liberty and necessity, with regard to it, are nonentities; and it can as little be oppressed with the one as rejoice in the possession of the other. The case is exactly similar with regard to man and beings of a higher order, or even the Deity himself. The extent of knowledge, the degree of holiness, and the amount of physical power possessed by an archangel, must vastly surpass our loftiest conceptions, and hence

his sphere of intellectual, moral and physical freedom must, in the same degree, be superior ; but the humblest being in the moral creation, who knows the relations in which he stands to God and his fellow creatures, who regulates his will by this knowledge, and who is able to gratify his desires, which, when so regulated, must needs be easily gratified, enjoys a freedom as perfect and complete, in all its departments, as the bright occupant of the throne nearest that of the Almighty. The two vessels, to borrow the striking illustration employed by an eminent divine for a similar purpose, are of different capacities, but they are equally full. Nothing taken from the copious contents of the one can be added to the perfect fulness of the other. In such a state of perfect enjoyment, there is no place for envy ; which must be the vice not less of a miserable than of a wicked being.

But to return from this digression, it must be admitted that, if we will employ the terms liberty and necessity with any rational meaning, and apply them according to any real difference in the objects, the intelligent being must be considered free who judges correctly of things as they truly are ; and that he alone who labours under misconception and mistake is enthralled by necessity. To such a being knowledge is power ; his weakness consists in ignorance.

But with regard to the independent existence

of the circumstances and relations by the perception of which man regulates his volition, if it be still urged that he is under necessity, inasmuch as his perceptions and consequent volitions are infallibly certain, this also is nothing but the necessity of existence, and is implied in the fact, that man is an intelligent being; for to a created mind, destitute of innate ideas, there can be no thought or intelligence where there is nothing to be known and understood. It were an insult to the understanding of the reader, in the present age, to offer a refutation of Hartly and Priestley's mechanical theory of association, or to attempt to prove that, in thought, external objects are the mere occasions or subjects, and not the cause. The mind is the sole agent, surrounding objects are the passive subjects of contemplation. Except the objects which produce sensation, whose influence, it appeared, man is perfectly able to control, nothing can become a motive and regulate the will which is not actually perceived and whose relation to us is understood. In the perception of the manifold relations of things, the intelligent mind is not less active than in its determination of the subsequent volition. The agency and power are solely on the part of the thinking being, and the surrounding objects, which he contemplates, are merely the passive subjects of his thought. And the excellence of this sort of agency consists in the fact, that it is

the power of judging what is right and best, and hence of fixing the will in the manner most conducive to the present and future interest of the individual. Man, whether considered as a contemplative being in the perception of truth, or as a moral being in the determination of his will, is the sole agent; the objects of the universe, which he beholds, are the subjects of his power. He is the sovereign, judging, willing, and commanding; they are the obsequious ministers of his pleasure, assiduously presenting objects of thought to his understanding, watching every opportunity to recreate and delight his senses, constantly providing occasion of salutary exercise to his active powers, and thus enabling him, instead of sinking into contemptible imbecility and insignificance, to ascend in the scale of intellectual and moral being, till he should be prepared for a nearer approach to the source of all wisdom and knowledge.

But not to insist longer upon an objection which would declare an intelligent being under necessity, because he has real and not imaginary objects of thought, and has thereby an opportunity of exerting the very power and agency in which freedom consists; let us rather proceed to notice the practical consequences, and to consider the argument derived from the certainty of future actions.

No being but the Deity, when prior to all crea-

tion he existed alone in his uncreated glory, has ever been otherwise situated than surrounding by a number of circumstances, by the perception of which he, less or more, regulates his conduct. The first subject of creative power found himself in the relation of a creature towards his God, and placed the Creator himself in a new relation by which, as a moral Governor, unchangeable in justice and holiness He thenceforth unalterably determined his conduct towards a moral creature under his administration. As the number of creatures was increased, the extent was enlarged to which the Deity fixed his future actions, with as much absolute certainty as could be those of his creatures by the laws of their constitution. Should we hence conclude that the divine freedom was abridged? No, certainly; quite the reverse. His liberty, we might rather say, was augmented, inasmuch as he had then an opportunity of enjoying it, by the exercise of his inherent power, which otherwise must have remained for ever inert. Though as a holy moral being He had infallibly fixed, for the future eternity, his conduct towards his moral creatures, this necessity was nothing but the fact that, having determined to act in a certain manner, and having expressed his determination by the creation of moral beings, he would indeed act according to the rule which He himself had laid down, and not contradict his own decree. The infal-

lible certainty of the future actions, which he has declared his purpose to perform, just proves the irresistible and infinite degree of his power, and hence the infinitude of his moral and physical freedom.

So groundless then is the supposition that the pre-determination of future actions, by external circumstances, as occasions not as causes, lays an agent under any necessity which is inconsistent with freedom, or rather which itself may not be the most absolute freedom. The fact of the certainty of future actions, depending, as it does, on causation, is, like it, perfectly indifferent to the question of liberty or necessity. It may be necessity, or it may be liberty, according to the agency employed in the determination. If a being have his actions pre-determined by the power of another, without his approbation and in opposition to his will, he is placed under a real necessity; but if by his own agency, the more infallibly certain they are, the greater his power and the more extensive his freedom. Hence appears the soundness of the views, on this subject entertained by the vulgar understanding of mankind, uncorrupted by a false and blundering philosophy. A man conscious of his own power, looks forward with full confidence to multitudes of actions which he purposes to perform, and never dreams that because, if nothing unforeseen intervenes, his conduct is fixed, that therefore his

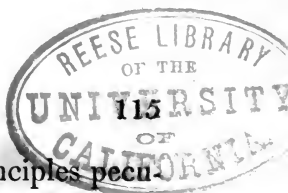
liberty is impaired. He feels himself an agent, and the certainty of his future conduct is enjoyed as one of the sweetest fruits of his freedom. He has resolved and feels confident of his ability to perform; and the more certainly and for the longer period his future conduct is unalterably determined, the more we admire his power and the greater is his liberty. Were there any doubt of his performance of the purposed actions, or did we imagine that they were subject to contingency, instead of believing him free, we would at once pronounce him *weak* and subject to a real and painful necessity. But could he, in the exercise of a clear and comprehensive intellect, and prompted by great and aspiring wishes, declare that thus and thus shall I act through life; and could he, in opposition to every obstacle, with dauntless and unbending resolution, make good his purpose; he would justly be considered as a man of no ordinary power, and be held to possess a degree of liberty far above that which mankind usually enjoy. His power and the certainty of his future actions, are exactly commensurate; and if he once imagine that the execution of his purpose is contingent, it is from the painful consideration that he is weak, and may want the ability to do as he has determined.*

* Thus the doctrine of our most holy faith, that God knoweth the end from the beginning, is proved consistent with free agency; nay, it is directly implied in the fact that men are free agents, or

Though therefore it is peculiar to the Deity, that in all his actions He is only carrying into effect his own decree, which was at first an act of his absolute sovereignty, emanating wholly from himself and independent of all foreign circumstances and relations; man is really, so far as action is concerned, precisely in a similar situation. The difference consists solely in the manner in which they have been brought into their respective situations, and not in the situation itself or its practical consequences. The Deity, by an act of sovereign power, placed himself in his present relation to his moral creatures: man was placed in his present circumstances, by the will and power of another, without his previous consent, which could not be given, when as yet he did not exist; but after having been placed in their respective relations, the *moral* Creator, acting according to the immutable attributes of his being, and the *moral* creature, acting upon the uncorrupted principles of his nature, are precisely in the same condition with respect to their mode of conduct.

This is obvious, when it is considered that the mind of man is not an arbitrary thing, formed

rather that they are agents; for if a man really be an agent, he is free. This doctrine, as well as others which are generally considered most hostile to liberty, are indeed equally consistent with liberty or necessity, though certainly incompatible with the imaginary liberty of a nonentity—which contingency implies.



upon no model, and acting on principles peculiar to itself. Revelation informs us that man was created in the image of God. This similarity of man to his Creator respects the Deity, both as an intelligent and moral being; and consists therefore, as we learn from the same source, in knowledge and moral holiness. Hence human knowledge, though finite, is true knowledge, and differs not in kind from that of God and of superior beings, who possess his image in a higher degree. What man, on sufficient evidence, perceives to be true, is true also in the sight of God; and what he perceives to be right, God also judges right. The knowledge of the one is infinite, that of the other exceedingly limited; but so far as it extends, the finite and the infinite exactly coincide. Whatever, therefore, God sees meet to reveal, as the expression of his moral will, enlightened man cannot fail to approve. His natural perceptions of right and wrong, or, as divines express it, the law originally written on his heart, and the revealed law of God speak the same language. Even in the present state of ignorance and moral corruption, it is the native dictate of the human mind, that all the commandments of his Creator are right. The infidel may please himself with the ingenious sophistry with which he attempts to support his paradoxes; or rather, conscious of his guilt, he may seek to remove the uneasy feelings of self-reproach and

shame, by labouring to convince himself and others of his moral consistency ; but, if he will consult the secret sentiments of his own heart, he will feel constrained to confess, that the law which enjoins nothing but supreme love to God and benevolence to man must needs be holy, just and good.

Observe then what would be the practical result, were man uniformly regulating his will by the dictates of an enlightened understanding. Judging all the precepts of the divine law right, he would will what God wills, and act as God commands. His volition and the will of the Deity would constantly coincide. The expression of the moral will of God, contained in the sacred Scriptures, would be the supreme and invariable rule of all his volitions and actions. The moral Creator and the moral creature approving the same thing, the one would will it to be obeyed, the other would delight to obey. The sentiments of every heart would be those of the generous king of Israel, " Oh how love I thy law ! how sweet are thy words unto my taste ! yea sweeter than honey to my mouth, more to be desired are they than gold, yea much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey, even the honey comb." And what would be the physical consequences of this state of feeling and manner of acting ? By the constitution of human nature, and by the appointment of the eternal Governor, happiness

would be the only result. The feeling of a good conscience—that most elevating and delightful of all the states of mind of which a perfect moral being is capable, is the necessary and immediate fruit of moral innocence. And under the government of a just and holy being, perfect happiness is the certain condition of all his innocent creatures. Innocence and happiness are indissolubly connected, both by our constitution and by divine justice. Light and heat do not more necessarily flow from the sun, while the present constitution of the universe remains unchanged, than is perfect felicity the consequence of moral innocence. The apostle spoke not less truly as a mental philosopher than as an inspired teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity, when he laid down the grand principle of the divine administration with respect to innocent beings, “glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.”

Such, then, is the only necessity, if, for want of a better, we may still employ the term, under which man is laid by his uncorrupted constitution. It is the necessity of being wise, virtuous, and happy, or, as the apostle finely expresses it, of seeking glory, honour, and immortality. To escape from this glorious necessity, an intelligent and moral being, while he actually exists, has no alternative but to be foolish, vicious, and wretched; and then, indeed, he is in

a condition most remote from a state of freedom. There is no medium between these two opposite conditions; for it is utterly unmeaning to talk of indifference being essential to a state of liberty. For an intelligent being to be indifferent to truth, he must become an idiot, or, rather, indeed, be annihilated; and the moral being, who is indifferent to virtuous conduct, if not enthralled by a degrading necessity, is just at the point which separates servitude from freedom, and is lost to virtue, if not abandoned to vice. To consider indifference as necessary to freedom is to forget a first principle of the right mode of philosophizing, and to borrow our conceptions of moral beings from the equilibrium of a balance, and not from the nature of the beings themselves. The more firmly and immutably a moral agent is attached to moral rectitude, the greater is his moral power and the greater becomes his moral liberty. We say of our friend, whose character we admire and on whose firm and unwavering principle we rely with perfect confidence, that he cannot commit such and such a crime; and we well know that the strength of his generous and pious feelings renders any act of meanness morally impossible; but that, in given circumstances, he will, with absolute certainty, act in a manner becoming himself. If it be otherwise, it is a proof of his weakness and degradation, and of the moral imperfection of his present condition. The

conduct of the Deity alone, as possessed of infinite physical, moral and intellectual power, and, therefore, infinitely free, is immutably determined. Had man, in like manner, kept his first estate and acted upon the law of his constitution, his conduct, with respect to his Creator and his fellow-creatures, had been determined for eternity, when, by the inspiration of God, he became a living soul; and never would he have been, as he now is, enthralled by the galling yoke of a degrading necessity.

Mr. Locke, though he did not fully understand the doctrine of liberty, was too sound a philosopher, and too well acquainted with human nature, to conceive the fact of existence incompatible with freedom. "Is it worth the name of freedom," he indignantly demands, "to be at liberty to play the fool and draw shame and misery upon a man's self? If to break loose from the conduct of reason, and to want that restraint of examination and judgment which keeps us from choosing and doing the worse, be liberty, madmen and fools are the only freemen. But yet, I think, nobody would choose to be mad for the sake of such liberty, but he that is mad already. The constant desire of happiness, and the constraint it puts upon us to act for it, nobody, I think, accounts an abridgement of liberty; or, at least, an abridgement of liberty to be complained of. God Almighty himself is under

the necessity of being happy ; and the more any intelligent being is so, the nearer is its approach to infinite perfection and happiness." *

This is the true doctrine of liberty. That the Deity is infinitely wise and holy, and perfectly happy, are matters of fact ; which *must be*, simply because they are. " I am that I am," the name by which Jehovah revealed himself to Moses, states the whole doctrine of this necessity. The more any intelligent and moral creature resembles his Creator in these attributes, the higher his perfection and the greater his freedom. The enlightened understanding and the holy heart truly constitute the freeman. When an intelligent being perceives true what is true, and right what is really right, he is under no necessity which is not necessarily implied in the fact, that he *is* ; and from which, therefore, he can be delivered only by annihilation. But who would be annihilated in order to escape so glorious a necessity ? It is nothing but the delightful fact, that the Eternal has called us out of dreary nothing to constitute a part, and no contemptible part, of his moral universe, and to share that intelligence and holiness which form the strength and the beauty of his own moral character. Away then for ever with the hateful name and doctrine of necessity, dishonourable to God and degrading to man, of which the very

* Human Understanding, Book II. Chap. 21. § 50.

suspicion strikes at the root of all the moral worth of the universe, and chokes every generous and grateful emotion. Let the man whom the divine Redeemer has made free rejoice in his freedom, with joy unspeakable and full of glory, knowing that by the grace of God he now *is*, and henceforth, secured by the power and faithfulness of his Redeemer, *shall be* coeval with his Creator.

SECTION IV.

MAN, IN THE EXERCISE OF HIS UNDERSTANDING, IS OCCASIONALLY UNABLE TO REGULATE THE DETERMINATIONS OF HIS WILL; THAT IS, IS SUBJECT TO MORAL NECESSITY.

WE have now considered man as an animal, a moral and an intellectual being, and we have found that in all these characters he is possessed of freedom. As an animal or voluntary agent, he is free, because he acts as he wills; as a moral agent, because he wills as he judges right; and thus it has appeared that the whole question of liberty is ultimately to be resolved into the plain fact, that man *is* an *intelligent* and *thinking* being. We next proceed to inquire whether his liberty is subject to limitations.

As a finite being, his intellectual and voluntary freedom are of course limited, though not thereby necessarily imperfect and incomplete; for as an intelligent being, he is not conceived to attempt, like Icarus, to rival the flight of the eagle, or like the giants, to pile Ossa on Pelion to scale the heavens; and if he know all that concerns his present and future security and happiness, and is able to execute all his volitions, he enjoys

a freedom commensurate with his capacity. Moral liberty alone in a perfect finite being, admits of no limitations ; for so long as he retains his innocence, he must invariably will as his understanding directs, and discharge all the duties which conscience enjoins. But this degree of liberty, in consequence of the derangement which sin has produced in the moral, political, and physical worlds, is not in the present state enjoyed. Animal weakness, poverty, the opposition of others, civil tyranny and numerous other untoward circumstances, frequently frustrate his fondest and most approved purposes, and blast his brightest hopes. With regard to intellectual freedom, too, mental weakness, the want of information, prejudice and many circumstances of a similar tendency, often render him unable to perceive truths in which his welfare is deeply concerned. But as neither animal nor intellectual necessity directly involve the momentous distinction of innocence or guilt, nor produce consequences which affect his condition in an after life, nothing more respecting them requires here to be said. Moral liberty only is the subject of inquiry.

In proving the existence of moral freedom, it will be recollected, we did not attempt to establish any universal principle, but considered it enough to point out some instances in which man is confessedly free, and leave it to be here ascertained whether or not this liberty is subject to li-

mitations. We there illustrated the general and what, had man remained unfallen, must have been the universal law of his moral constitution ; and the object of the present section is to point out and illustrate the exceptions to this law, and consider man not as he should be, but as he really is.

It has been long a received maxim among philosophers, that the will is always fixed according to the last dictate of the understanding. President Edwards has clearly stated, and the analysis of volition formerly given proves the correctness of his views, that the only judgment which uniformly accompanies the determinations of the will is, that the object of volition is, at the time, the most agreeable conduct the man can adopt. To render any thing most agreeable, it must become the object of predominant desire ; and since the predominant desire invariably involves volition, that a man prefers, chooses, or judges most agreeable what he wills to perform, must be invariably true. So far and no farther does the judgment uniformly approve of the volition. The action which the man resolves to perform is judged, of all present alternatives, the most conducive to his enjoyment ; in other words, he desires it most, and, as a voluntary agent, he necessarily wills it.

In cases of moral liberty, there is, besides this judgment, the additional conviction, if the action

is moral, that it is right ; if of a prudential nature, that it is most advantageous upon the whole. Whether such a decision of understanding or conscience sanctions every volition, is our present inquiry.

That this question is to be answered in the negative, scarcely any body will deny. No writer, worthy of notice, holds a contrary opinion. All the moralists, from Solomon and Socrates, to the present day, agree in describing and deploring the folly and wilful wickedness of men ; and every one's daily experience must convince him that their complaints are not without foundation. Whenever a man does what he knows to be wrong, he presents an instance of moral necessity. I have acted wrong, I have sinned, my conscience condemns me, I should have acted otherwise, are the familiar expressions which state the fact ; and we have just, as formerly, to appeal to those who use such language to prove the truth of the principle in question, by an explanation of their meaning. All that requires to be done, therefore, in this place, is to illustrate the process by which the man is deprived of his moral freedom, and laid under the influence of necessity.

By the analysis of volition formerly given, it appeared that the desire, or in cases in which conflicting desires are experienced, the predominant desire of any thing which we believe to be in our own power, constantly involves the

determination of the will, or rather, in these circumstances, is itself an act of volition. To show then how the will may be determined, in opposition to the conscience or understanding, we have only to consider the circumstances on which the strength of desires depends. If any circumstance, independent of the understanding, is found able to give predominant vigour to any desire, the same cause, of course, accounts for the existence of disapproved volition.

The common error of metaphysicians, observes a celebrated philosopher, who, when he had no paradox to support, nor Christian doctrine to subvert, must be allowed to have been a most acute observer of facts—the common error of metaphysicians, says he in his *Discourse on the Passions*, has been in ascribing the direction of the will entirely to reason, and supposing passion to have no influence. There are two principal circumstances on which the strength of a desire depends : the strength of the susceptibility, and the amount of perceived good by which it is addressed. Were there no susceptibility adapted to a particular object, it is plain that no perception of it could awaken any feeling ; and it is as plain that the strength of the feeling must always be in proportion to the strength of the susceptibility, as well as to the magnitude of the object which addresses it. These two circumstances combined determine the strength of any

desire. A great susceptibility, addressed by a weak motive, may produce as vivid a desire as the most powerful motive, when the susceptibility is weak ; and in every instance, the greatest susceptibility, addressed by the most powerful motive, will necessarily give birth to the most intense desire.

That the various susceptibilities of our sentient nature are found, in different individuals, of very different degrees of strength, is a truth familiar to all. It is this which is the cause of the variety of disposition and original character observable among men. One man is naturally of an irritable temper, a second timid, a third compassionate, a fourth prone to sensuality. This difference in the natural strength of some of the susceptibilities does not always imply a like difference in all, which would constitute superior strength of character ; but in the same mind, one susceptibility is strong, another weak ; and generally, on account of the moral corruption of human nature, the virtuous and higher susceptibilities are too feeble, while the vicious and animal propensities possess an undue degree of strength. To prove and illustrate these facts, the slightest knowledge of human character, or of the moral condition of men in every age, will suffice. Vice has hitherto been more prevalent than virtue ; and while comparatively few have been eminently distinguished by the latter, myriads have been sunk to

the lowest degree of moral degradation by the former.

But leaving this subject to the moralist, the fact of various susceptibilities of feeling and passion being found in very different degrees is undisputed. Let two men then of equally correct and well informed judgment, but having any susceptibility in different degrees of strength, contemplate any object addressed to that susceptibility, and it will be seen how far the vividness of feeling depends upon the understanding. With the same judgment of the intrinsic magnitude of the motive, the one may experience the liveliest emotion or be excited perhaps to passion, while the other may remain unmoved. Let the same individuals of dispositions so contrary, contemplate another object addressed to another susceptibility, and their experience may be just the reverse. Such instances are not uncommon in daily life. And in all such cases, the difference in the strength of the susceptibility is the sole cause of the variety in the vividness of the feeling to which it gives birth. A thief may have the love of money so strong, and the feelings of conscience so seared ; or the man of strict integrity may be so moderate in his desire of wealth, and have the susceptibility of moral disapprobation so keen, that the perceived importance of the motive, addressed to both, would have comparatively little influence in determining the rela-

tive strength of the desire which is produced. A shilling will prove a greater temptation to the one than the largest possible sum to the other, though both individuals may differ little in their estimate of the real value of the object. The rich miser may accept the bribe which the man oppressed with all the evils of poverty and want would reject with indignation.

In all cases of this nature, the judged value of the object is but one, and often the least important of the circumstances which determine the strength of an external motive, and enable it to excite desire. The strength of the susceptibility is the principle source of its power. The man indeed may judge the thing highly valuable, and certainly most desirable, but it is only from its adaptation to gratify his violent passion, and not from the perceived and intrinsic value of the object itself; in the same manner as a man distressed with hunger strongly desires food, and therefore attaches a high value to that which appeases his craving appetite. The judgment, in such a case, is not the result of an enlightened understanding, estimating things as they really are, but of a depraved susceptibility and an imperious passion, over which, it may be, by a course of vicious indulgence, the man has lost all control.

This fact then of the undue strength and weakness of certain susceptibilities lays a ground for

the will's being determined in opposition to the understanding. But though it explains the manner in which the volition may be at first fixed, it does not account for all the satisfaction with which disapproved volitions are usually attended. The consciousness of willing what we condemn naturally gives rise to the feeling of disapprobation, and to other painful feelings which, even in the most depraved mind, are scarcely ever altogether extinct; and were there not another principle in human nature which delivers us from this uneasiness, we would much less frequently feel satisfaction in the commission of what we know to be wrong, and imagine that pleasure can be the attendant of guilt.

The principle to which I now allude is the fact, that every sensation or feeling draws the attention of the mind towards its object; and when therefore a number of feelings are present together, the most vivid secures to its object the greatest share of the attention. This is just the principle which we formerly noticed, under what we took the liberty to term the sentient law of Association. Though now, in consequence of the moral corruption of human nature, it is, like all our other powers, frequently perverted, it is evidently calculated to serve most important purposes in the economy of mind; and is, as was hinted before, the principle by which the wisdom of our Creator has put the thinking powers, to a certain extent, under our voluntary direction,

The principle itself is familiar to all. Every one must have felt how irresistibly his mind is drawn towards any object which strongly engages his affections. In some cases, as in that of violent love, the mental abstraction is proverbial. The mind, though powerfully solicited by numerous present objects, finds itself carried away, by a gentle but irresistible influence, towards the beloved object which occupies the heart, and in the mental contemplation of it, finds the whole attention engrossed, to the exclusion of every other subject of consideration.

This principle then, combined with the undue strength of certain susceptibilities, accounts for the anomalous fact, that the volitions of a rational being are occasionally fixed without the sanction of the understanding. Let two susceptibilities of an opposite tendency, one of which is strong and the other weak, be addressed by their proper motives, and observe the result. Two conflicting feelings are instantly aroused, the one lively and the other languid, and both solicit the attention of the mind. The stronger one, by the principle last described, secures to its own object a greater share of the attention, and in the same proportion withdraws it from the object of the feeling by which it is opposed. It thus obtains a double advantage in strengthening itself and weakening its rival; and as soon as one of the incompatible motives gains the decided ascend-

ancy, the volition is fixed and action follows of course.*

With this process every one who has been in the habit of reflecting on the operations of his own mind must be well acquainted. By the man of sanguine temper, especially, it must have frequently been experienced to his cost. Though perfectly convinced of the impropriety, or rather sinfulness of the undue indulgence of passion, and how degrading to his character and hurtful to his interests its gratification must prove, and though determined by every interesting and powerful consideration to check its impetuosity ; let some sudden provocation be offered him, and his settled judgment and previous resolutions prove feeble barriers against the rising emotion. The feeling of resentment instantly springs up, his attention is engrossed, other considerations are overlooked and excluded, he looks only at the injury which has been done him, and judging from his partial view of the circumstances, resolves to take a step, against which all his virtue and prudence had combined to guard him, and which perhaps he will never cease to regret.

In many cases of violent passion, the general principle holds true, that the man acts upon the decision of his understanding. By the influence of the principle stated above, he takes a partial

* See the admirable views of Locke on this subject, Note E.

view of the circumstances and consequences of his conduct, and forming his judgment on that alone, he seems to himself to act as rational a part as when, in the season of deliberate thought, he exercises all his powers, and calmly examines all the relations and consequences of his conduct, before he form his resolution. This is true, however, only when the passion is extremely violent, and when the man has lost all self-command. In the great majority of instances of moral necessity, the individual retains the use of his reason so far as to see clearly enough, that his conduct is wrong ; while, by the prevailing power of the disallowed feeling, he is hurried forward to gratify his desire, though its gratification is mingled with the painful feelings arising from self-reproach and conscious guilt. His conduct is wrong, he will acknowledge, at least to himself if not to others,—it is foolish, it is absurd, it may prove ruinous ; but it is the most agreeable, and he is resolved so to act. This is indeed the only reason which can, in every instance, be given. The action is the most conducive to his present happiness ; and man, as a voluntary agent, is determined to perform it. This being his resolution, he naturally favours the principle of sentient association, and endeavours to shut out all better considerations, which to him at the time are necessarily painful ; and when he succeeds in having his attention completely engrossed with the sinful desire, its gratification affords

unmingled enjoyment. Such pleasure, however, in a mind not wholly depraved, is dearly purchased by succeeding pain. When the forbidden passion is extinguished by gratification, the mind recovers its self-possession, considers all the consequences of the action, and calls forth the feeling of remorse, as the immediate avenger of guilt, and as the solemn and awful monitor of the tribulation and anguish which, by the law of our constitution as well as by the law of God, are due to acts of moral transgression.

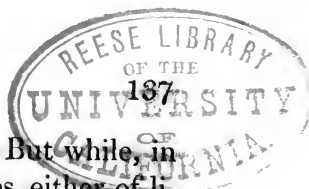
To these principles is chiefly to be attributed the well-known infatuating influence of passion; but there is another fact which, as a source of human delusion, deserves notice in passing. After a violent passion, gratified without the approbation of the understanding, has subsided, remorse and penitence, in minds not hopelessly depraved, generally succeed. In these moments, a man is filled with horror at the moral turpitude of his conduct, wonders how he could act so foolish a part, and believes that were he again exposed to the same temptation, he would not fail to resist it with success. This is not altogether a delusive feeling, as Lord Kaimes imagined. Though the external motive should remain the same, or become more powerful, the state of the mind has undergone so considerable a change, that there is frequently no probability that were the same temptation again presented, it would really prevail. A man smarting under the remorse and

shame which a fit of resentment has brought upon him, will, with serenity and dignity, sustain an injury much more galling than that which, a little before, he deemed intolerable. Hence, in the seasons of repentance, men consulting their present feelings alone, without considering the changes which take place in their minds, conceive it impossible that they should ever again commit the offence which they so keenly regret, and form resolutions to that effect. These purposes are, at the time, perfectly sincere, and are supported by moral power sufficient to carry them into execution. It is not till time has produced a change in the mental circumstances, by allaying the feelings of penitence and regret, and by restoring the susceptibilities of an opposite tendency to their wonted vigour, that the man discovers, that his most resolute purposes rest upon no surer foundation than mutable and transient emotion. Let the sensualist rise from the couch on which he has suffered for his intemperance, and on which perhaps, in the view of death, he uttered the most ardent vows and conceived the strongest resolutions, and be once more exposed to the temptation which he fondly believed could never again prevail, and he finds himself, as before, placed under the same irresistible law of moral necessity.

Moral necessity, it is to be recollected, is so called merely from the difference of the subjects,

and not from any essential difference which subsists between it and the necessity usually termed physical. They both depend on the same principle of causation ; and are equally absolute and certain in their results. The common belief of the difference which is imagined to subsist between them is a mistake, in consequence of the multiplicity of circumstances on which moral effects depend. Moral causes, that is, moral agents acting in certain circumstances, are connected with their effects as indissolubly and invariably as cause and effect are universally acknowledged to be in the physical world ; and it is in this indeed that all their power consists. This truth, however, as was formerly seen, lays no foundation for the absurd and unchristian doctrine of fatalism. Intelligent agents, as shall afterwards appear, have the power of altering the circumstances, and hence of varying the effects in the manner which they judge proper.

With regard to the degree of moral necessity, if the certainty of the result is alone considered, no gradations are conceivable. Every cause produces its effect with absolute certainty. Though, in popular language, we talk of chance and contingency, when we mean nothing more than that the cause of a particular event is unknown to us, we never imagine that any effect takes place without a cause, or that a cause, when left to operate without opposition, does not involve the



absolute certainty of the effect. But while, in this sense, there can be no degrees either of liberty nor necessity, in another, and in the proper sense, they are capable of gradations. Comparative power and weakness are the sources of these two contrary states ; and as the former are confessedly possessed in very different degrees, the same is true also of the latter. A man who endeavours to remove an obstacle which offers resistance but a few pounds greater than the utmost degree of his muscular strength, is subject to a less degree of necessity than he would be, were he to attempt to change the site of a mountain. A little mechanical ingenuity would gain his purpose in the one case ; no possible contrivance nor effort could enable him to gratify his desire in the other. In like manner, a man is under a much higher degree of moral necessity, when hurried away by the overwhelming violence of some habitual and confirmed passion, than when he is gently and softly drawn by the influence of a desire, which is powerfully opposed, and all but overcome by another motive which his judgment approves. In the one case, no argument nor motive has any power to check the impetuosity of the guilty passion ; in the other, the sight of a friend, the least hint, the view of a landscape or a picture, or any other circumstance the most trivial, will divert his attention, and change his scarcely formed purpose.

The original ground of moral necessity is laid,

as has just been stated, in the fact that, in consequence of the moral corruption of our nature, the animal susceptibilities, and those of a vicious tendency are too strong ; while those of a virtuous and religious character are too weak. A number of circumstances combine to strengthen the causes of moral servitude ; but as we cannot here enter into detail, it may be enough to mention what is usually termed *habit*, as the chief circumstance in which all the rest unite their influence. By the expression, habit, or the influence of habit, is meant merely the fact, that any faculty often exercised, or any susceptibility or feeling frequently indulged, acquires a greater degree of strength ; while on the other hand, a faculty and susceptibility neglected, or a feeling frequently suppressed, loses its original power. This fact is a general law of the human constitution, regarding man as an animal, an intelligent, and chiefly as a moral agent. It is not an original faculty as Dr. Reid imagines, but a fact which regards all our faculties ; nor is it, according to Dr. Brown, to be reduced to simple suggestion ; for it regards man in all his capacities, bodily as well as mental, and not merely as a thinking and sentient being. In a being infinite in all perfection, the influence of habit, of course, can have no place. It seems the law of our constitution, by which the Deity has provided for the progressive improvement of his finite creatures in intelligence and

moral worth. But though originally designed and admirably calculated to raise mankind in the scale of being, when perverted and abused, as was remarked respecting another law, it necessarily secures their intellectual and moral degradation. By the influence of this principle, there is no resting place in the progress of a moral being like man :—he must either advance in knowledge and virtue, or gradually sink into a state of mental imbecility and moral worthlessness.

Let a man then repeatedly indulge any vicious propensity, in opposition to the dictates of his conscience, and habit begins to exert its influence. The vicious susceptibilities and passions acquire new strength, and the feelings of disapprobation and remorse, and others of a virtuous tendency are, in the same proportion, weakened. Let the process go on for a length of time, and the sinful passion grows beyond all control, the conscience becomes seared, and all the barriers, which, by our constitution, have been raised against the encroachments of vice, are gradually broken down. In proportion as the vicious susceptibility becomes acute and the feeling resulting from it strong, the susceptibilities and feelings of an opposite tendency are weakened ; and thus, while the man naturally finds greater enjoyment in the indulgence of the guilty passion, he loses his power to resist its influence. In the

beginning of his career, the sinful desire was perhaps so nearly counterbalanced by his better feelings, that had he been placed in more favourable circumstances—a little less exposed to temptation, a little better instructed, and associated with companions of a different character, the feeling, which has now become the ruling passion, might have been completely suppressed by better principles, and have never overleaped the bounds of duty. He was then almost in that state of indifference, which if not liberty, as has been most falsely supposed, is the turning point between liberty and necessity. Habit would have inclined the almost even scales either way, and might easily, by the attention of others in conveying instruction, and guarding the individual from temptation, have turned the beam to the side of freedom and virtue. Vicious indulgence quickly effects his complete enthrallment; for it is a lamentable truth that, in the present state of human corruption, habits of vice are much more speedily formed than those of virtue. A guilty passion soon usurps the dominion of the heart, and suppresses and extinguishes every better feeling by which it could be opposed; and then with respect to that passion, the moral freedom of the individual is totally, and so far as depends on human power, hopelessly lost.

In this process of moral degradation and en-

thralment, the judgment is weakened as well as the approved susceptibilities and feelings. We forbear to inquire whether, as the ground of the well known maxim, what we desire we easily believe, the will exerts any influence upon the understanding, in the same direct manner that the understanding acts upon the susceptibilities, in the excitement of feeling and emotion. Though there are some curious facts which might seem to support the affirmative, it appears, after careful examination, improbable that it does; and the principle of sentient association alone seems sufficient to account for all the phenomena.* But whether or not the will exercises any direct influence over the understanding, every one who has cultivated his mind by the study of any science is aware, that the intellectual powers are subject to the influence of habit. As by frequent

* "Intellectus humanus luminis sicci non est; sed accipit infusionem a voluntate et affectibus: id quod generat ad quod vult scientias. Quod enim mavult homo verum esse id potius credit. Rejicit itaque difficilia, ob inquirendi impatientiam; sobria, quia coarctant spem; altiora naturae, propter superstitionem; lumen experientiae, propter arrogantiam et fastum, ne videatur mens versari in vilibus et fluxis; paradoxa, propter opinionem vulgi; denique innumeris modis iisque interdum imperceptibilibus, affectus intellectum imbuunt et inficit."—*Nov. Organum, Aphor. 49.* It is to the principle of sentient association that all these effects are to be ascribed. This principle alone will explain how it happens that, in the warmth of controversy, men equally candid and upright take very different views, and support very opposite opinions; and any one acquainted with this profound and admirable aphorism of Bacon, will not conceive every man dishonest and a villain, who, in such circumstances, when a variety of feelings are excited, acts an uncandid, and, it may be, a dishonest part.

exercise in the contemplation of any class of truths, the intellect acquires a vigour and acuteness which at first it may have seemed impossible to possess, so by the want of cultivation, it loses its original energy. No man can habitually indulge any criminal passion without, in a great measure, discarding the consideration of right and wrong. Perceptions of this nature are the certain source of uneasiness, and the less frequently they are possessed the greater will be his enjoyment in the commission of crime. He will not therefore recur to them unless when forced upon his attention from without ; and thus habit will be allowed to exert its full influence. Hence his moral perceptions will become feeble, confused and obscure. And though it does not appear that the understanding, when not destroyed by insanity, can be rendered altogether insensible of moral distinctions, the perceptions of right and wrong may be rendered so feeble and indistinct as to be practically inefficient. And besides the usual influence of habit, sensual indulgence produces an effect on the understanding similar to that of old age. A sort of mental palsy seizes the intellect of the habitual debauchee, and he becomes incapable of forming any large, distinct and vigorous conceptions of moral truths. His enfeebled faculties, no longer directed to their proper objects, by the feelings of which his sear-ed conscience has lost, in a great measure, the susceptibility, and warped by the guilty propen-

sities by which his heart is possessed, scarcely serve to convince him that there is any real difference in actions except in their effects. He first palliates his crimes and then defends them. The action indeed is not in itself right, he may admit, but, in his particular case, there are so many alleviating circumstances, that surely he is not much to be blamed. He would at once condemn the same fault in another ; but in that case he considers, it may be, only the aggravations : in his own, the palliating circumstances alone are taken into view. He thus neglects one precept of the divine law, and violates another, till every command of the decalogue has been trodden under foot ; and still he sees not how sin should be considered so criminal, and how he can be deserving of the punishment which God and man have pronounced to be due to moral transgression. Though the conclusion which the Author of the *Treatise of Human Nature* would draw against the reality of moral distinctions is not to be admitted, his premises state but the fact, that the grossest crimes, by frequent repetition, seem to the criminal himself to lose their moral turpitude. As to all practical effects, at least, the statement is true ; and when the influence of habit is considered in conjunction with the numerous feelings, which, in a mind conscious of guilt and determined to persevere in its criminal course, favour and augment its effect, it is not difficult to account for the fact.

In this manner then vicious habits dry up the very sources of virtue and freedom. A darkened and enfeebled understanding, and deadened susceptibilities, render the individual incapable, at least to all practical purposes, both of moral perceptions and virtuous volitions. The unhappy man though polluted with every crime and loaded with infamy and reproach, appears among men with all the effrontery and composure of a brute ; and it might be doubted whether the degraded being was ever endowed with a moral nature, were it not recollected that, at a former period of his life, he could blush with the consciousness of guilt. Of this he is no longer susceptible ; and regardless of the disapprobation of men, and unmoved by self-reproach, he seems to himself to enjoy perfect freedom ; but it is the freedom of the selfish animal, and not of the being who does one thing because it is right, and refrains from another because it is morally wrong. He judges of the nature of actions only by their effects, and he never *feels* that he has acted amiss, unless his conduct injure his selfish interests and diminish his enjoyment as a sentient being. The distinction of right and wrong, sinful and holy, is to him practically unknown : advantageous and disadvantageous, hurtful and profitable, agreeable and disagreeable, are the characters which all his actions assume.

It is not to be supposed that an individual in

this state of moral degradation, may not conduct himself with all the external propriety of the most virtuous character, or may not discharge all the external duties which morality and religion require. His degradation consists in this, that he is incapable of acting on the virtuous and holy motives which should direct the conduct of a moral agent. Though virtuous and religious in external conduct, he is nothing but the selfish animal within, endowed indeed with a little more sagacity than the horse and the dog, but acting not more than they on the motives peculiar to moral agency. Like them he acts not because it is right, and refrains not because it is wrong, but from other considerations altogether, different from theirs, it may be, but not more of a moral nature than is the emulation of the horse or the appetite of the dog. And this is true not merely in cases of degraded profligacy, when the wretchedness without indicates the thralldom and turpitude within: in instances of successful ambition or avarice, the man may possess a character more estimable than that of the enslaved and abandoned voluptuary, but may, in reality, be nothing more than the intelligent, accomplished, prudent, selfish voluntary agent, as incapable of the higher moral feelings as the most worthless of the brutal creation. The eloquent and highly gifted statesman, or the merchant eminent for the punctual discharge of every engagement, may,

with all their seeming virtue, act as little from the feelings of right and wrong as the most abandoned criminal, who recklessly violates all the duties of religion and social life. The ruling passions of the characters are different, and certainly their conduct produces very different effects on their own happiness and the welfare of society, but they all follow the impulse of their predominant feelings, equally regardless of the moral nature of their actions, and are equally incapable, from the simple consideration that the thing is wrong, of refraining from any action which they believe conducive to what they deem their paramount interest. When some criminal but advantageous measure is suggested to the prostituted minister of state, he may feel utterly incapable of deciding on the propriety of the scheme, by estimating its moral character, and of rejecting with detestation the idea of serving his personal interest by the commission of a crime ; and if he reject the measure, it may not be because it is wrong, but because he judges some other plan more advantageous and favourable to his views. Whether or not he may be still capable of moral perceptions, he is utterly incapable of acting on the moral feelings, in opposition to the feeblest motive which interest or ambition may suggest.

Hence is illustrated the correctness of the statements of the sacred Scriptures respecting the

moral inability and necessity of man as a religious being. It is not affirmed that man may not externally yield almost perfect obedience to all the precepts of the divine law, for this is admitted. Nor is it maintained that man does not frequently act on virtuous motives which the law of God approves, or is incapable of regulating his conduct, to a considerable extent, by the feelings of conscience,—doing what is right because it is right, and abstaining from what is sinful merely because it is wrong ; for instances of this sort are recorded, and consciousness establishes the facts. The Scriptures affirm that man, in his present state of depravity, is incapable of acting on the motives by which, as a moral being standing in a certain relation to God, he should uniformly regulate his conduct. And when the paramount importance of the relation between the creature and the Creator is considered, and the extent to which man violates the consequent obligation is duly estimated, the general and emphatic statements of the word of God respecting human depravity will not appear to exaggerate the truth. The relation of man to his fellow imposes duties of an inferior class ; but the gross violation and contempt of them is justly esteemed to involve a high degree of guilt, and to prove the criminal utterly destitute of moral worth. How much greater a degree of moral corruption and guilt does it bespeak, that the duties which man owes

to his Creator and Redeemer are neglected and violated, not only without regret and remorse in the criminal himself, but almost without exciting a feeling of disapprobation in the minds of the beholders.

But to illustrate fully the extent of the necessity under which man, as a religious being, now lies, must be left to the theologian. It is however but justice to say, in passing, that this important and arduous subject was never more ably treated than by Luther, and some of those illustrious men who were the means of effecting the Reformation in the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the midst of the profound ignorance with which they were surrounded, and which is more unfavourable to the discovery of truth, among the absurd dogmas on this subject held by the scholastic philosophers, they clearly illustrated the doctrine of universal causation, and hence, in consequence of human depravity, the moral necessity by which the whole race of mankind are less or more enthralled. From the absurdity of the contingency which virtually denies the existence of the universe, as well as from that of indifference, as essential to moral freedom, which virtually deprives man of his moral nature, they are equally free. They described man as they found him,—an agent possessed of a moral nature, and who hence, in a state of purity, would invariably act consistently with the principles of

moral rectitude, but who in the state of moral corruption consequent to a fall, would, to a great extent, as invariably and necessarily commit nothing but sin. They did not, indeed, in common with all the philosophers of the age, and perhaps of all ages before, with the exception of the inspired writers, clearly perceive some of the important relations of their subject, and, consequently, occasionally seem to make contradictory and inconsistent statements; but, enlightened and guided by revelation, they always were, what no philosophical writer, ancient or modern, ever was, right in their practical conclusions. And after all the wretched attempts which superficial observation, ignorance, false philosophy, and party zeal have made to refute their doctrine, every candid and careful observer of human nature will readily assent to the great truths so skilfully and ably maintained by Luther against the contemptible sophistry of Erasmus, that in man, as he is now found, there is, with respect to God, no good thing, but that it is God who worketh in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

When then, to conclude this subject, by the habitual indulgence of any vicious propensity, an approved susceptibility and feeling have been weakened, and the feelings which act as opposing motives have been strengthened to a certain degree, the individual is placed, with regard

to the approved feeling, under moral necessity. — He is irresistibly compelled to will and to perform what he disapproves and condemns. The arguments and motives which are calculated to arouse his moral strength in support of the decision of conscience, have lost their power ; for the understanding itself may have been rendered incapable of forming vigorous and adequate conceptions of the motives, and their proper susceptibilities may be completely destroyed. In many such cases, it is vain to talk to the unhappy man of the wickedness, the folly, the absurdity, the ruinous consequences of his conduct. He may admit most honestly the truth of all your arguments, and in moments of reflection when his passions are laid to rest by satiety, he may feel and deplore the horror of his thralldom ; but the languid emotions which his deadened susceptibilities are able to produce will, in the season of temptation, be quickly suppressed by the powerful and tumultuous passions, which opposite motives awaken. He will feel, as some unhappy men are constrained to confess, that he cannot do otherwise than he does. In certain circumstances he truly cannot do otherwise, but is under the absolute necessity of committing such and such crimes. The wretched being has sold himself under sin, to use the language of the apostle, and is completely the slave of a master, whom, whether he approve or not, he is compel-

led to obey. The laws of his constitution, which, if not corrupted, render him strong to obey the dictates of his conscience, now in consequence of the indulgence of sinful habits, bind him hopelessly down to the practice of iniquity. As soon may he resist the law of the philosophical necessity by which the planets revolve or the mountains stand upon their bases, as resist the philosophical necessity by which he is impelled to the commission of crime. The prophet correctly states this law of our nature, when he demands, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil."* From this state of degraded thralldom, the Creator of the human soul alone can deliver the miserable being whom habit has confirmed in vice.

* Jeremiah. xiii. 23.

SECTION V.

THE MEANS OF BEING DELIVERED FROM MORAL NECESSITY—AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY.

FROM the doctrine of moral necessity, as just stated, an argument is usually drawn against the responsibility of the human agent. No being, it is said, can be under any obligation to work impossibilities. If man, by his constitution, is placed under the necessity of acting in a certain manner and cannot act otherwise, he cannot incur moral guilt. Neither the justice of the Deity, it is contended, nor the moral judgment of man can impute guilt, when there is no power to act in a different manner. Power and liberty to reject the wrong and to choose the right must ever form the ground of moral responsibility.

The argument here employed is confessedly legitimate, and the conclusion cannot be denied. If any being, without any act of his own, is placed in such circumstances as render all his actions necessary in the proper sense; and has no means,

direct or indirect, of delivering himself from this condition, he cannot be the subject of moral responsibility. Such however is not the condition of man. The necessity under which he labours is the result, to a great extent, of his own criminal conduct ; and he has the power, by indirect means, of effecting his own deliverance.

The source of all moral necessity is the moral corruption of human nature in consequence of the fall. The strong bias to evil, on account of the derangement of our moral susceptibilities, is now natural to man and is entailed upon him, as an individual of the fallen species. So far a man is not personally chargeable with crime. But the natural corruption of the human heart is the direct cause of but a small portion of the necessity under which mankind labour. Their own criminal conduct and their sinful indulgences are the cause of that hopeless necessity, by which they are generally enthralled. Hence their responsibility and their guilt remains ; and they must in justice be chargeable, as moral and intelligent beings, with the consequences of their own voluntary actions.

But it is not on this fact alone that we would rest the responsibility of man. To convince a miserable being, who is impelled by the irresistible influence of moral necessity to the commission of crime, that his own criminal conduct has placed him in this unhappy condition, and that

he is therefore still responsible for his actions, establishes the justice of the divine administration in the punishment of moral transgression ; but does not illustrate the glorious economy of mercy under which we now live. The truth which we now wish to exhibit, as the ground of moral responsibility, is, that man possesses the means of delivering himself from the thralldom of moral necessity, and that multitudes actually effect their deliverance.

That the same cause, in the same circumstances, will constantly and invariably produce the same effect, is the general principle of causation on which moral necessity depends. Hence, when a human being has once acted in opposition to his judgment, by the wilful commission of a crime, when again placed in the same circumstances, external and internal, he will uniformly act in the same manner. To act in a different manner, he must change either his own dispositions and feelings, or avoid the external temptation ; and both of these are, to a certain extent, in his own power.

The source of all human liberty, and of the power of man to rescue himself from necessity, is the enlightened understanding. In every instance of moral necessity, when guilt is incurred, the man is aware that his conduct is wrong, or at least, is not certain that it is right ; for what is not of faith, or done with the confidence of

its being right, must, to a moral agent, be admitted to be sin. When this conviction is not present, the individual is not in a state of moral servitude, nor does he, in the proper sense, contract moral guilt. This is the doctrine of enlightened reason, as well as of the sacred Scriptures. The law of Moses expressly provided for sins of ignorance; and our Saviour himself and the apostles state the same principle. The servant who knows not his master's will, and consequently does it not, shall be beaten with fewer stripes than he who wilfully neglects it; and they who sin without the revealed law, shall be judged by the law of nature with which they are acquainted; for as another apostle beautifully adds, and justly lays down the great principle of moral obligation, "to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin."* A man, therefore, who ignorantly violates a divine precept, is guilty only so far as his ignorance is wilful, and the result of his own criminal negligence; but if, in any case, he is unavoidably ignorant of any law, he does not incur guilt, nor is subject to moral necessity, though he act in opposition to it in the discharge of what he falsely conceives to be his duty. He mistakes falsehood for truth, and is under what was termed intellec-

* James iv. 17; also Rom. ii. 12.

tual necessity ; but, as a moral being, he enjoys freedom, and is free from blame.

Since, then, in all cases of moral necessity—for it is unnecessary here to mention those cases in which a man, by a long course of profligacy, has rendered himself, to a certain extent, incapable of moral perceptions—the man is aware that he is acting amiss and should act otherwise, it is obvious where lies his power to vary his circumstances, and prevent the conduct which he condemns. The intelligent being is free, and is able to devise means of altering his circumstances and of preserving his freedom. He is like a man who finds an obstacle, which he attempts to put out of the way, offer a resistance greater than his physical strength, and who, though he cannot increase his muscular power, can easily, by the aid of a little mechanical ingenuity, apply it in a manner which enables him to effect what he desires. It is true, a case of moral necessity is not altogether analogous to this or any other instance of animal necessity, where the will of the individual co-operates with his judgment in carrying his purpose into effect ; for as a voluntary agent, a man will never spontaneously employ means to enable him to frustrate his own volition. But, besides the fact that the thinking and judging principles are, to a great extent, independent of the will, and act without its concurrence, it is to

be recollected that in few instances of moral enthralment is the will, at all times, determined to act in the manner which the conscience condemns. The most habitual passion, and particularly the violent passions, as anger, lust, &c. by which men are most usually enthralled, are not always active ; but leave numerous intervals when the individual experiences the influence of better feelings, and is conscious of moral power sufficient to carry into effect the dictates of his understanding. The man is then free, and has the power to secure his future freedom ; and it is not till temptation again occur that he is enslaved by moral necessity.*

When an individual then is aware that he has once been overcome by any passion, he is able either to shun the external circumstances in which he is exposed to temptation ; or by the

* The reader will perceive that, in order to obtain a full view of the subject now before us, it is necessary to reason by turns in the character of the philosopher, the Arminian, and the Calvinist. Neither the sceptical moralist, who talks of the omnipotence of virtue ; nor the Arminian, who descants largely on the power of the knowledge of the sublime and affecting doctrines of Christianity to renovate and ameliorate the heart ; nor the Calvinist, who maintains that the grace of God is all in all in the moral deliverance of the human soul, is to be considered altogether in the wrong. Man can do something to effect his moral freedom ; by the knowledge of Christianity he is enabled to do more, and by the word of God is required to co-operate in his own deliverance ; though all natural power, and all use of means, are perfectly nugatory for the great purpose of moral redemption, unless God himself “ create a clean heart and renew a right spirit within him.”

consideration of virtuous motives, he can change, to a very considerable extent, the state of his own mind, and by the strength of his better feelings, arm himself against the approaching danger. This accordingly is frequently done. A man of ordinary virtue and prudence, who has fallen before temptation, is careful ever after not to expose himself in a situation which he has formerly found so hazardous ; or if he cannot avoid exposure, he endeavours, by reflection and argument, to arouse every motive which may enable him to resist the assault which he apprehends. He shuns the company which has seduced him, he seeks better society, he considers every argument which should strengthen his virtuous resolutions, he watches over his own mind, checks every train of ideas, and suppresses every emotion which would tend to arouse the desire which before had hurried him into crime. By these and numerous such expedients, he maintains his moral power, and secures himself the enjoyment of freedom.

To curb any powerful propensity in this manner always produces a struggle with one's own feelings, and in many cases, gives rise to an arduous and painful conflict. It is not, however, a hopeless or interminable warfare. Habit exerts its influence on the side of virtue as well as in favour of vice. The virtuous feelings, which at first could scarcely check the criminal desire,

daily acquire new accessions of strength ; and the vicious desire, which is habitually suppressed, becomes weak in the same proportion. A strong passion may not indeed be reduced to easy subjection, till after years of incessant warfare and the pain of repeated defeats ; but by steady perseverance, the individual will not fail to experience an increase of moral power, by which the agreeable feelings of a good conscience will be less and less embittered, with the uneasiness of an internal conflict. Though the path of rectitude, to borrow the idea of an ancient moralist, may at first be rugged and difficult, it will by and by become smooth and agreeable ; and the traveller will be convinced, by a delightful consciousness, that virtue is its own reward. The feelings of a good conscience are the most delightful and exhilarating of all the emotions of which the human mind is by nature susceptible ; and if any thing can add to the joy which they afford, it must be the consciousness of being rescued from the cruel thralldom of a degrading passion, which was ever ready to hurry the man into infamy and guilt ; and of having obtained the power of successfully directing all the faculties and feelings of the soul to the accomplishment of wise and virtuous ends, which at once confer true dignity and substantial glory, and secure permanent and unfailing enjoyment.

Among a people enjoying the advantages

afforded by Christianity, it is scarcely possible to ascertain to what extent a man, without the aid of revelation, could maintain his moral freedom, and advance towards moral perfection. Profane history presents some distinguished examples of virtue ; and every man must be conscious that something may be done, by the natural perception of right and wrong. But though individuals, without the benefit of a revelation, have been eminent for particular virtues, it may be doubted whether man, by his unaided powers, does not, in consequence of his natural corruption, uniformly descend, and not rise in the scale of moral being. It is certainly so with the great body of mankind. The conscience, unenlightened by revelation, can do little more than convince a man of his guilt in acting against its dictates, without being able to furnish motives sufficiently powerful to rescue him from moral necessity, by enabling him to act in the manner he approves. The history of all nations confirms the truth of this statement. While the body of the people may improve in civilization, they sink in moral worth. They cultivate, it may be, some virtues, but they indulge in a greater number of vices ; and hence, by the usual influence of habit, their motion is retrograde, and they rapidly subject themselves to the degrading yoke of moral as well as, it frequently happens, to political servitude. The rude shepherd, who tended his flocks on the

Palatine and Capitoline hills, was often a more virtuous and independent character than the admired and applauded *imperator*, who, in after ages, rode amid the splendour of a triumph to lodge in the capitol the spoils of the vanquished nations.

The Christian revelation alone presents motives adequate to secure, to any considerable degree, the moral emancipation of mankind. The motives afforded by the conscience, requiring us to love virtue for its own sake, and to hate vice because it is wrong, are addressed to men as unfallen beings, and in that state are no doubt perfectly adequate to command obedience; but they are not adapted to a state of guilt and moral depravity. The motives presented by Christianity are suited to man as a fallen being to be restored, and address all the most powerful susceptibilities of human nature, both in a state of the lowest degradation and of the highest moral perfection. By revealing the future condition of men as vicious or as holy beings, all the strong selfish but natural and lawful feelings are engaged on the side of the conscience. The character and conduct of the Godhead, in the wondrous economy of redemption, addresses all the solemn feelings of conscience itself, as well as all the benevolent and generous principles which, of all the feelings of the human heart, most powerfully and directly support the principles

of right and wrong. Every susceptibility of our nature indeed is addressed, and every motive presented which is calculated to affect us as selfish, as moral, or as rational beings.

Did Christianity, therefore, do nothing more for mankind than furnish them with a number of new and powerful motives which reason could not afford, it would be of incalculable service to the cause of human liberty. If men have been found who, with very limited knowledge, and furnished comparatively with few powerful motives, have done so much in subduing imperious passions, cherishing the virtuous and amiable feelings, and preserving themselves, to a considerable degree, in a state of moral freedom; what might not be effected by the honest Christian? A man, possessing the knowledge of the great doctrines of revelation, and convinced on rational evidence of their truth, has his intellectual and moral power vastly augmented; and, without any supernatural aid, might, by the natural influence of motives, be expected to do much to recover, or at least, to maintain his freedom. The state of some of the modern nations of Europe proves such to be the case. Multitudes, who are not Christians in the strict sense of the term, feel the practical influence of Christianity more or less, and exhibit a degree of integrity and moral worth vastly superior to the virtue of the Greek and Roman population, in

their best times, when, with the exception of the knowledge of Christianity, they were in a situation certainly more favourable to the growth of virtue. The conviction, or it may be, rather the surmise and the doubt that there may be a future judgment and an eternal state of rewards and punishments, imposes a restraint on the vicious passions of the most abandoned, and gives a sacredness to virtue which, in their eyes, it could not otherwise possess. And the notion, if not the firm belief, that the means of salvation and of future felicity have been procured by so amazing a display of the divine love, and are faithfully put in the power of all, must awaken a feeling of remorse in numerous instances, in which a man altogether unacquainted with Christianity would feel nothing but satisfaction in the violation of the law of God.

But these are the effects when the facts of revelation are scarcely believed, and but incidentally considered. Were a man to be thoroughly convinced, as he may be, of the truth of the doctrines of the gospel, and to receive them in an honest and good heart, that is, sincerely to act upon them so far as he is confessedly able and as multitudes of others do, how much might he accomplish in delivering himself from the dominion of guilty passion? Perhaps in the character of those who are usually termed *legal* Christians, we may be considered to have a specimen of what

the belief of the principles of Christianity is able to effect, without divine influence. If there is not supreme love to God, how much correct knowledge and sublime sentiment may there be respecting his character? what clear and vigorous conceptions of the evil nature of sin? what honest dread to offend? how much anxiety to discharge all commanded duty? what self command? what temperance? what benevolence? Such characters are certainly to be found, as the young ruler mentioned in the gospel. Compare such individuals with the ordinary standard of human worth, and their superiority will appear. It was such a character that in the pure and searching eye of the Redeemer appeared lovely; and it is only when the question, "what lack I yet," is honestly put and candidly answered, that it is discovered that men of this sort have not yet reached the perfection of their moral nature, nor are acting on the high principles which become moral beings aspiring to immortality.

These considerations, however, may give us some idea of the extent to which men may preserve and extend their moral freedom. But we must not stop here. We should see little of the foundation which is laid for moral liberty, were we to remain within the limits which have been arbitrarily fixed, as the department of moral science. Morality without theology is a non-

entity, existing in the dreams of the sceptical philosopher, but is not to be found in human nature.

Much as a man of enlightened understanding can effect in support of his moral freedom, and towards his deliverance from moral necessity, his utmost efforts are far from being able to obtain any thing like complete emancipation. The agency of the Holy Spirit of God is declared in Scripture, and is proved by the experience of those who most obstinately deny it, to be necessary to effect the deliverance of a corrupted and degraded moral being. The Spirit of the same God, who created the thinking mind and heart susceptible of moral feeling, can alone restore the moral constitution, when deranged and impaired by the commission of sin and by vicious habits. As the utmost skill of the physician cannot repair the constitution of the body, shattered and broken down by disease, though he may check for a little the progress of the malady and mitigate the sufferings of the patient ; so human wisdom, by argument and motive, may perhaps prevent the further enthrallment of the moral being, and restore him some degree of moral vigour, but it cannot effect a complete renovation of the mental susceptibilities, and enable the man to love, with all his heart and soul and mind, the being who of all others is most deserving of his love. To restore the fallen creature to this

state of perfection must be the work of the spirit of the Creator. The man, to use the language of Scripture, must be created anew,—he must be born again and made a new creature, by the same power which at first gave him existence and endowed him with a moral nature.

It is not necessary to illustrate further, in this place, this most important doctrine, which, with that of the atonement, constitutes the peculiar glory of the Christian economy. It is enough for our present purpose to be assured, that the aid of the Holy Spirit of God is faithfully and truly offered to every individual by whom the gospel is heard ; and that nothing is necessary to obtain it but to ask it from God in prayer. There is no previous change of character,—no reformation of conduct—no moral holiness required to entitle a man to the promised blessing. It is solely for his mercy's sake that God bestows it ; and He offers it to corrupted and sinful beings, not as a reward of their virtue and holiness, of which they have none, but in order to render them holy and virtuous, which they otherwise never could render themselves. Let a man, as a rational being, be convinced of the matter of fact, that he is in a state of degradation and exposed to misery ; and let him, as a sentient being, desire to escape suffering and obtain happiness, and nothing more is necessary, by way of motive, to render his prayer such as God will hear. It is

the atonement of the divine Redeemer alone which renders the prayer of fallen man acceptable to God. Though there is nothing holy in his motive, and nothing assuredly meritorious, if a man, as a rational being, believe that God is willing to deliver him from the wretchedness of moral servitude, and as a selfish being, desire to be delivered, he requires no other motive to give him a title to obtain his request. His claim is to be founded not in his own moral worth and holiness ; but in the unmerited mercy of God, who delighteth not in the death of the wicked, but who, as a moral Redeemer, will have all men to be saved.

It is true that before a rational being can come to God in prayer, he must believe that *He is*, and that *He is* the rewarder of them who diligently seek Him ; or, as the same idea may be expressed in reference to this subject, that *He is* the hearer and answerer of prayer. The belief of the existence of God, as the hearer and answerer of prayer, is the ground of prayer to the rational being, in the same manner as the desire of the thing sought must be its source in the sentient and voluntary agent. Both these states of mind are necessary to give birth to any unfeigned and honest prayer. The desire to obtain the thing renders it sincere ; the belief that God is the hearer and answerer of prayer renders it rational. Without the desire of the thing, prayer is a hy-

pocritical form, and without the belief of the promise of God to hear and to answer it, a rational being cannot be sincere in praying to God.

These two states of mind combined evidently constitute what, in the language of Scripture, is usually termed faith, and it is interesting to observe the analogy between this and volition. Volition, as was shown, is a complex feeling, resulting from the desire to perform an action or attain an object, and the belief that the object will be attained, because we know its attainment depends upon an exertion of our own power. Faith is the similar desire of an object combined with the belief that we will attain it, because the faithfulness and power of God are pledged to bestow it. The desire is the same in both cases : the belief, in the one case, rests on the knowledge of our own power ; in the other, on our knowledge of the power and faithfulness of God. With this difference the states of mind are precisely the same. The object of volition is something which we believe to be in our own power ; the object of faith is something which God has promised to man. We believe that we shall attain the desired object in the former case, because *we are able* : we believe that we shall obtain it in the latter case because *God is able* and faithful.

To give rise then to the prayer of faith, which is the only real prayer, and that of which we have

now been speaking, a man must desire what he prays for, and he must believe, since God has declared that they who seek what He offers to bestow shall find, that he will certainly obtain his request. If a man has not this belief, it must arise from one of two causes, either that he does not desire the thing which he prays for, or that he doubts whether God is faithful and able to bestow it. If he does not desire the thing, his prayer, of course, is feigned, and he has no reason to expect that God will hear him; but if he is conscious of desiring it, he must then deny the ability of God to answer his prayer, or which is equivalent, his faithfulness to fulfil his promise, and then though he may be sincere in desiring the thing, he is not sincere in asking it from God. To render prayer to God unfeigned both states of mind are equally necessary,—the consciousness of desiring the thing, and the belief that all who ask what God has promised to bestow by a general promise to men, will most certainly obtain their request. The general promise of God pledges his faithfulness; and heaven and earth may pass away, but they who ask shall find.

It is true, as was remarked respecting volition, that the feeling may not always amount to *absolute certainty*, but there must always be such a degree of probability as that on which a rational man could act with confidence in any ordinary

transaction. This is indispensable even in instances in which it may seem least necessary. The beggar who sits by the way-side could not be rational or sincere, but must be in jest, were he to ask an alms from an incidental passenger, without any hope of obtaining his petition. Unless a man, convinced by rational evidence of the power and faithfulness of God, present his prayer with a probability of success at least equal to that on which he could act without hesitation in temporal affairs, he may desire the thing for which he prays, but he cannot be honest in asking it from God. His prayer is a mere form, irrational as well as insincere, and though it may conveniently serve the purpose of supporting the decent ceremonial of religion, and enable the man in office to earn a comfortable livelihood, it is detestable in the sight of the searcher of hearts, and though he make many prayers the Lord will not hear him.

The conclusion to which we have been naturally led, by the analysis just given, is exactly conformable to the doctrine of the sacred scriptures. "*Let a man ask in faith,*" saith the apostle, "*nothing wavering* ; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed : *for let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of God.*"* Our bless-

* James i. 6, 7.

ed Redeemer states this doctrine more explicitly and fully. "Wherefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, *believe that ye receive them*, (or that ye shall receive them,) *and ye shall have them.*"* This passage contains the whole philosophy, most admirably stated, of the doctrine of faith and prayer. The desire of the thing, and the belief that God will bestow it are, on the principles of the human constitution, absolutely necessary to give birth to any prayer which is not, even at best, an unmeaning form. It is a mistake to conceive, as some have imagined, that the faith which our Saviour here describes, is that extraordinary sort called the faith of miracles ; for it should be recollected that all sorts of real faith differ only in their object, but not as states of mind. The faith of miracles has the performance of a miracle for its object, saving faith has justification, and the faith of which we have been speaking has sanctification ; but as states of mind, the desire and belief must be found in them all. Speculative or historical faith is the belief of facts or doctrines without any desire to obtain the objects which they reveal. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and suppress the good desires to which it should give rise.†

* Mark xi. 24.

† Faith, the Christian may object, is the gift of God, and the argument given above seems to suppose that a man of himself is

Let a man then, who is groaning under the physical evils of moral necessity, desire to be delivered—not because he hates sin for its own

able to believe: how are these things compatible? This is an objection which every honest and well informed believer should be expected to urge; and to which I rejoice to be able to present a satisfactory answer. If there be a plain doctrine in Scripture it is, that the faith which constitutes a man a Christian is the gift of God; and if any pretended philosophy should teach otherwise, the plainest believer, with the Bible in his hand, may boldly pronounce the philosophy false and its conclusions illegitimate.

Faith, as a general state of mind, is one of our most ordinary and universal feelings; and it is acted upon by the statesman, the agriculturist, the merchant, and indeed by mankind universally in all their transactions which regard the future. In all of them there is a desire of something and a belief of its attainment, as the principle of action to a rational and voluntary agent. The merchant desires payment of his account, and knowing the ability and honesty of his customer, believes that he shall receive it, and thus presents an instance of strong faith. From the mere circumstance then that a man has *faith*, nothing can be inferred respecting his true character in the sight of God. This, it is plain, must be ascertained, not by the *general* nature of faith, but by its *specific* character, which depends upon the object, or which is equivalent, upon the nature of the feeling which accompanies the belief. Accordingly the apostles are very careful to specify the nature of the faith which is peculiar to the Christian. It is faith which worketh by *love*. And it so worketh from the circumstance, that the sinner, feeling himself hopelessly undone and knowing the power and faithfulness of the Redeemer, has trusted on Him for righteousness and strength; and hence, he loves God because He first loved him. Such is not the specific character of any faith besides. The faith of the natural man, of which only we have been speaking above, may be characterized as the faith which worketh by *fear*; in as much as it arises principally from the fear of punishment, or, at best, from the consciousness of guilt. This feeling a man must experience before he will ever have recourse to the Redeemer, or

sake, or loves holiness, but because he fears suffering and desires happiness, present his prayer to God, believing that he will receive his request, and he shall prevail. The power and the faithfulness of the Most High secure the fulfilment of his promise. The desire of the petitioner may be languid, and his belief weak, and hence his faith feeble; but God is waiting to be gracious, and is more ready to answer than he is to ask; and if he only really believe, according to

employ the means of grace; and it is a matter of fact that it is experienced every day by multitudes, who notwithstanding do not become believers. But when the gospel is clearly and distinctly presented to a man, he has no encouragement from God, and no promise in Scripture to warrant him to expect any further blessing, unless considering the truths and evidence which are laid before him, and acting upon such feelings as he has, he seek the aid of the Holy Spirit which the gospel offers. He must act upon the faith which worketh by *fear*, in order to have wrought in him by the power of the Holy Ghost, the faith which worketh by *love*; and in so doing, he does nothing more difficult, and certainly nothing more holy, than is done every day by one man trusting to another. Hence numerous passages, which speak both of the agency of man and of God in the work of moral renovation, are easily explained; as the following—"But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."—*John i. 12.*—The receiving and believing seem to refer to that natural faith, consisting of rational conviction, such as many of the unconverted Jews possessed, that Jesus was the Messiah, attended with a desire to obtain from Him salvation. The power to become the sons of God, which was conferred in consequence of this, seems to imply that renovation of the Holy Spirit which converts the selfish, natural faith, which worketh by fear, into that confiding, holy, purifying faith which worketh by love.—See Note E.

his faith shall it be done unto him. If he do not obtain his request, it is because he denies the power or the faithfulness of God. Though there is nothing holy in his motive, but rather the reverse, inasmuch as it falls far short of the motive which should actuate a moral being ; it is the distinguishing glory of the Christian economy, that the means of grace are suited to man, as a fallen creature who can merit nothing by his moral worth, but who has every thing morally good to receive from on high. It is not of perfect, but of fallen men, and of the prayer which they are able to offer, that the Saviour speaks, when by so affectionate and forcible an argument, he seeks to encourage confidence in God. “ If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone ? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent ? or if he ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion ? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask him ?”*

With regard to what the Holy Spirit of God does in renovating the heart of man, nothing can be said ; our knowledge extends only to the feelings and actions, which the man, in consequence of divine influence, is enabled to perform, and not to what the Spirit does to the man. Re-

* Luke xi. 11—13.

specting these moral effects, the sacred scriptures afford the most ample information. But we may remark, in this place, that they are all produced by means of argument and motive, according to the established laws of mind ; and in a degree which leaves room for the influence of habit. A man must not wildly imagine that by one act of faith or by a few prayers, supposing them to be honest and to be truly answered, that he will obtain complete deliverance from the thralldom of guilty passions, and procure such a degree of moral power as will enable him henceforth, without further divine aid, to maintain his freedom. Divine strength is given, like the heavenly manna to the Israelites, day by day, according to our wants, and must be sought by daily and habitual prayer. The man must pray literally without ceasing ; not indeed with the audible utterance of words, but with that constant dependence on God which constitutes the essence of prayer. By this means he will be gradually delivered ; and in his progressive advancement towards the perfection of his moral nature, he will experience the truth of the maxim of the apostle, “ where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” His moral power will be daily augmented, or as the Psalmist expresses the same idea, his heart will be enlarged, and he will with ease and joy run the way of God’s commandments. An understanding enlarged and enlightened with moral

truth, and approved feeling ever ready and able to support its dictates, will produce a peace and a joy of heart which the slave can never experience, and which will afford the most convincing and delightful of all proofs, that God, whose will is the law of the universe, created man to be free. Political freedom, which men have so ardently sought, and for which they have sacrificed so much, is to a certain extent common to man with the brutes, and is chiefly to be desired from the consideration of its moral effects: the freedom which the Spirit of God bestows, involves all the important advantages for which political freedom is truly valuable, and secures, besides, our future happiness as spiritual and immortal beings. The man whom God makes free is free indeed. Poor and neglected he may be, and as from the obscurity of the condition in which, to borrow the beautiful idea of the poet,* divine providence has hid him from the evils which oppress the great, he feels the yoke of despotism comparatively light, he may as little experience the advantage of civil freedom, in mitigating the toil and poverty to which he is perpetually doomed; but he is a denizen of heaven, and though excluded from the society of the great

* AGAM.—Heureux qui, satisfait de son humble fortune,
Libre du joug superbe où je suis attaché,
Vit dans l'état obscur où les dieux l'ont caché.

Iphigénie, Acte I.

and the court of kings, he has a place prepared for him before the throne of God, and will hereafter hold no subordinate rank under the government of the King of kings.

Hence then, to conclude from all the facts which have been stated, appears the ground which is laid for moral obligation and responsibility. The original source of all moral distinctions is the moral attributes of the Creator, and the expression of his moral will is the supreme and only standard of duty.* But the immediate source of moral obligation to man is the possession of a moral nature,—an understanding capable of perceiving the distinction of right and wrong, and moral feelings to enable him to fix his volitions according to this distinction. Were the understanding incapable of moral perceptions; or the heart not susceptible of moral feeling, the human agent, like the brutes, would be no longer a subject of moral obligation. Although therefore man has lost a considerable part of his original moral power, in consequence of the fall, the fact that he retains as much of it as enables him to do something for the preservation of his moral liberty ; that the motives which a clear and well authenticated revelation affords enable him to do more ; and above all, that this revelation distinctly informs him how he may obtain the aid

* See Note F.

of another to effect for him his complete deliverance, establish his moral responsibility undiminished, or rather increase it, inasmuch as he now stands in relation to God, not merely as his Creator and preserver, but in the far more endearing and interesting relation of Redeemer. His intellectual power is thus augmented; and though his moral power has been diminished, as an intelligent being, he is amply furnished with the means of restoring it. He is in full possession, therefore, of the two qualifications which constitute a responsible agent—the knowledge of his duty, and power sufficient to perform it.

In vain then may the sceptic or the fatalist argue against human responsibility, and from the fact of the universality of causation, infer that actions cannot be otherwise than they are. Such a conclusion, as was formerly seen, proceeds altogether on a mistaken view of the nature of causation. Though every cause produces its effect with absolute certainty, there is no cause, except the all-wise and Almighty First Cause, which may not be resisted, and its effect prevented by another cause more powerful. Now in every case of moral necessity, when a man does what he knows to be wrong, there are two opposing causes at work—the understanding or conscience which approves of one thing, and an appetite or passion which prompts the voluntary agent to perform another. And these, it is to

be recollected, are not unintelligent causes like the weights of a balance, to which they are often compared ; but like two combatants engaged in a conflict, or rather like an intelligent agent struggling with blind, unintelligent matter. The rational and provident being knows the difficulties with which he has to contend, and can employ means to overcome them. He is aware that when placed in certain circumstances, and exposed to certain temptations, he will infallibly be brought under the law of necessity ; but he can foresee and avoid those dangers, or previously prepare himself to encounter them without injury. He knows the action is wrong, he may know his own weakness, he is aware of the means of escaping the danger, and before the temptation assail him, he is perhaps, as a sentient being, in a state of indifference, and is impelled by no strong feeling to neglect the due precautions. In all these circumstances, and they are all the important circumstances which affect the case, there is no necessity, except indeed the necessity which is implied in the fact, that we must act either in the one way or the other, which is, as was before shown, the necessity or fact of existence, and is the very circumstance on which our liberty depends. We are placed under no necessity by God ; for his law commands us to do what we *know* to be right and forbear what we *know* to be wrong ; and besides He freely and

faithfully offers us aid to enable us to perform the one and reject the other. We are under no necessity from our mental constitution ; for in every instance of moral servitude, we do what our conscience clearly convinces us we ought to forbear. We are under no physical necessity ; for we are equally able, in this respect, to act in the one way as in the other. Nor are we under any necessity from our feelings ; for if we have desires which lead one way, we have other desires which oppose them, and are able to keep the forbidden desires sufficiently in check, till perhaps, by our guilty imprudence, we expose ourselves to danger, which, as intelligent beings, we may foresee and by precaution escape. In all these circumstances, there is no unavoidable necessity. We may indeed, by a course of criminal indulgence, have formed habits by which we are irresistibly overcome ; or we may, by one imprudent and criminal step, be laid under the necessity of taking another ; but this proves our guilt instead of palliating our crime. As rational and moral beings, we are under no irresistible necessity, except that of doing what God commands because we judge it right. If we violate this necessity, we not only commit an act of rebellion against the most High, but we do violence to the principles of our rational and moral nature, or in the strong language of inspiration, we sin against our own soul.

Should the fatalist endeavour, by verbal subtleties, to evade a conclusion which deprives him of the satisfaction which he affects to derive from the attempt to persuade himself that he never does wrong, it would be easy, did our limits permit, to recal to his attention a multitude of facts which, if they did not convince him of the right and the wrong of his conduct, would, at least, prove to him that, if he were not a moral, neither was he a rational being. Besides the fact, that thousands escape from the necessity which he pronounces absolute and irresistible, his own conscience might be appealed to in support of the truth, that in numerous instances, he really had the alternative to act in one way or in another ; and that in indulging one desire in opposition to another of which he approved, he rendered himself criminal and deserving of blame. Should the sophistry of a false philosophy, supported, as all such sophistry is, by the feelings of a depraved and worthless heart, lead him to deny the inference of his own demerit, he would find himself, even then, as unable to escape the conclusion as to divest himself of his nature. Did his servant, to whom he had been uniformly indulgent and generous, rob him or knock him down, and as a proof of his respect for the opinions of his master and of his gratitude for his kindness, plead in his excuse that he was perfectly blameless, for he acted not without a mo-

tive and could not do otherwise ; the philosopher would be lost in the injured and indignant man, and he would practically prove, either that he was a moral as well as a rational being, or that he was neither the one nor the other, but was to be truly considered both an idiot and a brute.

But on these topics our narrow limits forbid us to enter ; and indeed it is unnecessary. The sophist may bewilder and perplex the reason ; but he cannot alter the nature of the man, and reduce him altogether to the brute which he wishes to prove him. The understanding and conscience, if suppressed at one place, will burst forth at another, and bear clear and decided testimony, both to the moral nature of the human species, and to the justice of the Deity. If the corrupted moral being will not readily acknowledge demerit in himself, he will often grant it in others ; and while he seeks to persuade himself that he cannot, by his constitution, act otherwise, and therefore cannot do wrong, he will fondly enough claim to himself the merit of doing right, and thus virtually establish the distinction which he affects to deny. He will readily admit, in his own case, the justice of one of the great principles of the divine administration : “ Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with them ; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.”* The counterpart of this he would de-

* Isaiah iii. 10.

ny ; but he cannot divest himself of his moral nature. At one time or other his conscience, in spite of all the arguments and fancied demonstrations which sophistry, not philosophy, has ingeniously given, will be able to convince him of the truth of the disagreeable but just and equitable principle, necessary in conjunction with the other to render the administration of a moral government not merely just but merciful : “ Woe unto the wicked ! it shall be ill with him ; for the reward of his hands shall be given him.” And how dreadful to suffer the punishment of crime, when tormented with the conviction that it is justly merited.

SECTION VI.

THE INTRODUCTION OF MORAL EVIL.

THE subjects which have now been briefly illustrated throw much light on several important doctrines of Revelation; but it is not the intention to employ them for this purpose at present, but to leave the application, which would necessarily lead to a long discussion, to be made in another place. There is, however, one subject so intimately connected with the preceding inquiries that this Essay would appear incomplete without it, namely, the Introduction of Moral Evil and with it moral necessity.

Whence comes evil? is a question which has been often put; and it is confessedly neither uninteresting nor frivolous. How, under the government of a being infinite in power, in wisdom and in holiness, moral evil could be introduced, is an inquiry which cannot fail to be interesting to man groaning, as he does, under its direful effects; and a satisfactory answer cannot but prove beneficial, both in illustrating and justify-



ing, to his apprehension, the character of the Deity, and in giving him a juster conception of his own condition, as a fallen creature. Knowledge on such subjects, if it is to be acquired, must always be useful ; and it is only ignorance, or, which is much worse, science falsely so called, which can prove hurtful to an intelligent being, under the administration of a wise, and just, and merciful Creator.

Happily to this important question, if we are content to reason from facts and not from conjectures, a most rational and satisfactory answer can be given. Our information, it is plain, must be drawn exclusively from Revelation ; and the sacred Scriptures conduct us to a certain point, and give us an account of the introduction of evil into our *own world*, and among the race to which we belong, in a manner worthy of Scripture given by inspiration of God. The mistake of most writers on the origin of evil has been in attempting to explain too much, forgetting that, as finite beings, we are perhaps incapable, at least in the present state, of comprehending the whole truth ; and that, as moral and responsible agents, we require to know only as much as concerns ourselves—our present duty and our future hopes ; and above all, that we have no data on which to found any conclusion beyond the history of our own species. While Revelation is fully adequate for all the purposes for which it

was intended, and is perfect so far as it extends, containing every thing that is necessary for the instruction and salvation of mankind ; it must not be imagined that it contains a complete system of divinity, or gives a full account of the divine administration of the universe. The astronomer with his far reaching tube finds a limit to his knowledge, and never imagines that he knows all the universe, because he cannot see any thing beyond the point to which his vision extends ; so the divine must be satisfied to confess his ignorance beyond a certain limit, and recollect that, though his knowledge is correct and true, it is still but finite knowledge, and embraces but a small portion of the moral empire of the Almighty. A complete system of divinity, embracing the universal administration of God, may be compared to an immense circle, of which we see only a part, and of which the extremities, of course, appear to us to run in opposite directions. Did we imagine that we saw the whole figure, we would necessarily form a very erroneous conception of its nature ; and did we attempt to unite the opposite points, we would at once destroy its perfection and symmetry ; but could we trace out the diverging lines, we would find how they meet at length, with the nicest mathematical precision ; or did we apply the rules of art to measure the portion which we behold, we would immediately discover how beautifully all its parts

were related to the whole and to one another. Let us act thus in examining the doctrines of Revelation respecting the origin of evil. We cannot contemplate the whole of the divine administration ; but let us apply the rule of justice and mercy to all the parts of it which we know, and it will appear that the revelation and law of God is truly, as the sacred writer expresses it, perfect, and altogether worthy of its infinitely perfect Author. Let us acquire the knowledge of the truths which are actually revealed ; or to resume the illustration, let us trace the circle as far as we can see it, and when we come to the extremities of the visible part, let us, as sound philosophy requires, rejoice in what we know and be content to remain ignorant of what lies quite beyond the sphere of our knowledge. Let us not attempt to form complete systems of theology, and to reconcile difficulties which, with our present partial knowledge, seem inexplicable ; and hence, by our conjectures respecting what is not revealed, limit and explain, or rather explain away, what is revealed. Such a mode of proceeding is repugnant to every sound principle of rational inquiry. It is an attempt to measure the knowledge of the Almighty, by our own narrow capacity—to thrust together, with our babyish grasp, two remote points of that immeasurable circle, part of which we behold shooting forth, like the arch in the clouds, in a curve of

perfect beauty, bright at every point with colours of equity and mercy, to embrace the eternity of past, present, and future.

To guard us against this hazard, two rules are carefully to be observed, in endeavouring to ascertain the nature of the divine administration and the origin of moral evil. First, The character and decrees of God can be known to us, only by his works of creation and providence, or by the economy of redemption revealed in the sacred Scriptures. Second, If the inferences from facts which take place under the divine administration, or from any doctrine of revelation, are at variance with any other express statement of Scripture, our reasonings, though legitimate, but proceeding most probably on partial data, must be considered fallacious, and give way to the authority of inspiration. The strict observance of these rules will do much to preserve us from error, in the present or any similar inquiry, and will guard us against the presumption of fancying that we know all things respecting God, as well as from the danger of obscuring what is clearly revealed, in our anxiety to explain what is not revealed.

Respecting the origin of moral evil then, among the celestial spirits, the sacred Scriptures afford us no information. We have simply the fact that, at the creation of the world and of man, there was a number of powerful spirits in a state

of rebellion against their Creator; but how they came into this state we have no account. Any attempt, therefore, to account for the origin of moral evil among them is unphilosophical in the extreme—a subject for the dreams of the poet, but unbecoming the true philosopher and the theologian. We have no information respecting their condition, as moral beings, in their state of innocence, nor of the circumstances in which they were placed, and we know not the endless variety of conditions and circumstances in which moral beings may exist; and any conjectures respecting them, from the knowledge of our own condition, must be extremely fallacious. The best that can be said of the most plausible accounts, which fancy and not judgment has given to the world, is that they may possibly be right, but that there is the highest probability that they are wrong. This is true certainly of almost the whole of them; for they are directly opposed to the statements of the sacred Scriptures, as well as to sound reason, and could be believed only by a sceptical mind, entangled in the toils of metaphysical subtlety. On the principles of true philosophy and sound reason, we have no alternative but to acknowledge that we are utterly ignorant of the whole matter, and have no means of acquiring information. The opinion of a distinguished French philosopher, if considered as respecting the origin of moral evil

generally and not merely, as he states it, its introduction among men, contains much sound philosophy, and deserves the attentive consideration of every inquirer into the origin of evil. "Several considerations," says he, in publishing the second edition of his work, "have struck me which I had not formerly, and which produce in my mind a fresh and stronger conviction than ever, that the best answer which by natural means (and we may add by revelation also) can be given to the question, why has God permitted sin? is to say, I know nothing about the matter."*

This is indeed the only answer which can be given; and it is needless to say that there is a vast deal more philosophy in confessing ignorance, and checking all propensity to enter the regions of conjecture, than in furnishing ingenious and subtle, but false and fanciful solutions of a difficulty. Every tyro in philosophy can indulge his imagination in solving difficulties, or rather finds it difficult not to please himself with some fancied solution; none but a well disciplined mind, long accustomed to ascertain, with

* Il m'est venu de pensées, que je n'avois pas auparavant, et qui me convainquent tout de nouveau et plus fortement que jamais, que la meilleure reponse qu'on puisse faire naturellement à la question, pourquoi Dieu a-t-il permis que l'homme pechât? est de dire, je n'en sçai rien. Je croi seulement qu'il en a des raisons très dignes de sa sagesse infinie mais qui me sont incomprehensibles.—*Bayle's Dictionary, Art. Pauliciens, Note M.*

accuracy, the true limits of human knowledge, can say to himself decidedly, on such and such a subject, I will form absolutely no opinion.

Let us then lay it down, as a first principle in the present inquiry, that we are totally ignorant how moral evil originated among the fallen spirits; and remain satisfied with the matter of fact, that at the creation of man, these spirits were actually in a state of revolt against their Creator. Let us suppress every tendency to form any conjectures respecting the manner in which they came into that state; and especially guard against being influenced by such conjectures, in any inquiries respecting the divine administration subsequent to the creation. To conduct the investigation in this manner, the philosopher has only to reflect that he is totally destitute of the means of information, and that all attempts to solve the difficulties connected with the subject must be, at best, but conjecture, unworthy of being deemed, in any degree, even probable. The Christian, to render him satisfied with his present limited knowledge, has the more interesting and generous consideration, that "the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;"* and that what he knows not now respecting the divine administration, he

* Psalm 145.

may know hereafter.—Now he sees through a glass darkly ; but then face to face : now he knows only in part, but then shall he know even as he is known.*

Our present inquiry, therefore, is limited to the introduction of moral evil among men, respecting which we have ample and satisfactory information.

Man, we are told, was created in the image of God, which, we are taught, consists in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. This just states the fact, that he was created a perfect moral being, possessed of an understanding capable of perceiving moral truth, and of a heart susceptible of moral feeling, to enable him to will and to act according to his moral perceptions. He was thus perfectly able to retain his integrity, by constantly doing what he knew to be his duty, and consequently was rendered a fit subject of moral government.

In order to understand the nature of moral government, it is necessary to distinguish the different meanings of the phrase “ will of God,” so often employed in the sacred Scriptures, and in theological writings. This expression has two very different meanings. It signifies what, for the sake of distinction, may be termed the *physical* will of God, which always implies the

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

exercise of his power ; as when, at the creation, He said, let there be light, and there was light ; when He divided the Red Sea ; and when, at his command, the sun stood still. His will in this sense is irresistible. He doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth,—none can stay his hand from working, or say unto the Almighty, what dost Thou ? The will of God, in its second signification, may be termed his *moral* will. It implies only his moral approbation of certain actions as right ; and hence, his authoritative command to his moral creatures to act in such a manner, and to refrain from the opposite conduct. In this sense, the will of God may be resisted ; and is resisted by every sinner, every time he violates a divine command, and thereby opposes his will to the will of his Creator.

Respecting the will of God in these two significations, it is to be remarked, that the former always necessarily involves the latter, but the latter never the former. Whenever the Deity exerts his power, it is always in perfect consistency with his immutable rectitude and holiness ; and all his volitions and all his actions are morally right. Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne,—just and true are all his ways. Every exertion of his physical will, not less than his law, which is the expression of his moral will, is holy, just, and good.

Of these two wills of God, the moral will only, it is evident, has place in the government of rational and moral beings. His physical will is exerted in the creation and government of the material universe, as it also is in the creation of a moral being; but after such a being is put in possession of his moral faculties, physical force is no longer admissible in ruling him, except, indeed, in his reward or punishment in case of transgression. The use of physical force, in the government of moral agents, would do violence to their nature, as well as imply a contradiction in the divine decrees. When God, by an act of sovereign will, created man a moral agent, in his own image, He virtually decreed that, during the whole future eternity of his existence, He would treat him in a way suitable to the nature with which He had endowed him, and neither contradict his own purposes, nor do violence to the constitution of his creature. Accordingly, in the whole history of the human species, no instance occurs, except cases of punishment, in which the Judge of all the earth employs physical force in conducting his moral administration, but treats man always in the high character of an intelligent and moral creature, often condescends to reason with him as an equal, and seeks, by argument and motive, to enlighten his understanding, and influence his heart. Even in the Christian economy, when divine power is

employed to renovate the corrupted moral susceptibilities, the great law of moral government is not neglected. When the gospel is sent to a people, no violence is done to those who refuse to employ the means of grace ; for the Holy Spirit is promised to those only who ask his aid.

The Creator, then, having endowed the first man with a moral nature, adapted his mode of government to the dignified character of the subject. He simply signified to him his will, forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ; and having warned him of the danger, left it to himself to obey. Though a finite, he was a perfect being, and completely furnished with all the means requisite to enable him to yield perfect and uniform obedience ; for he possessed an understanding capable of perceiving the rectitude and propriety of the command, and physical and moral power to enable him to act accordingly. Thus, he was provided with the two requisites necessary, as was formerly stated, to constitute a being the subject of moral obligation : the knowledge of his duty, and ability to discharge it. There was no ignorance of what was right, nor of the fatal consequences of disobedience ; and no turbulent passions and vicious habits to mislead his judgment ; and he might, therefore, have for ever maintained his innocence, and remained in a state of purity.

Man, it is agreed, has all along been placed in a state of trial ; and it is usually believed, that the prohibition respecting the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was given for the purpose of probation. This was certainly one, but it seems by no means the sole or the principal object of the command. The principal design, it rather seems, was the moral improvement of the being. The influence of habit, as was formerly noticed, is an admirable provision of the Creator to secure the progressive advancement of his finite creatures. But had no such prohibition as that regarding the tree of knowledge been given, and had man not been exposed to temptation, comparatively little opportunity would have been afforded him to exercise his moral faculties ; and, instead of advancing towards a higher state of being, he would have remained for ever stationary, or rather might have retrograded ; and even retaining his innocence, might have lost his moral energy. The exposure to temptation rendered this impossible. To preserve his innocence, his moral faculties must have been in constant exercise ; and thus, while he would daily become a more powerful being, he would enjoy, in the feelings of a good conscience, a pleasure more delightful, and certainly far more ennobling than all the sensual enjoyments, even of paradise. Not only then was the prohibition of the tree of life virtually a promise, as has been often justly

said, which confirmed to him, so long as conscious of obedience, immortality and all the blessings of paradise ; but it opened an additional and nobler source of enjoyment in the vigorous exercise of the moral feelings, and by his constitution, secured to him the future possession of a higher and more glorious state of being. Thus, the temptation to which he was exposed, instead of being a real evil, might have become a new source of power and happiness ; and the first Adam, as the second Adam has actually done, might have converted the subtlety and wickedness of his enemies into the most successful means of promoting the glory of his Creator, and of increasing his own moral dignity and power, till, by the influence of habit, his knowledge and holiness were so much increased as to render him, thenceforth, for ever superior to all temptation, and to fit him for taking his place among the principalities and powers of heaven. But, omitting these considerations, so well supported by the principles of the human constitution, and so illustrative of the goodness and wisdom of the Creator, let us rather view the prohibition given to man as the means of his probation.

The individual would not deserve to be reasoned with; who would deny the right of the Creator to impose upon his creatures any duty which they have adequate power to discharge. The man who requires from another a piece of

easy service, for which he has given a liberal remuneration, never conceives himself guilty of injustice ; but how much more equitable in the Creator and Preserver of men, to receive from his creatures their just and reasonable service ? The duty imposed on man, so far from being burdensome, was the easiest possible, and greatly less than his moral power might have warranted. His adversary might have been permitted, as he now is, to assail him secretly, by means of his internal feelings ; but the fact, that his duty was embodied in an external object, restrained the power of his enemy to an open attack, and he was virtually secured from assault in every other quarter. Thus man, though possessed of a body, and acting under the guidance of sense, was put on equal footing with all his spiritual antagonists, and enabled to resist their power at a point where their spiritual nature gave them no advantage. So completely was this the case, that the tempter was under the necessity of assuming the disguise of one of the inferior animals, and notwithstanding his spiritual essence, was able to employ no invisible artifice, but to make his attempt directly and openly. Let us now see the manner, then, in which man fell from his primitive condition.

Satan, we learn, the powerful and crafty chief of the apostate spirits, was the seducer of man, and the author of moral evil in the world in which we live. There is much in the mode of his

temptation which deserves notice, and proves him to have studied carefully the human constitution, and to have known well on which side a human being, in a state of innocence, could be most successfully assailed. He assumed, in the first place, the form, or rather took possession of the body of a serpent, in order to draw the attention of the woman, and to be enabled to present her with the interdicted fruit. This creature, by the terms of the curse afterwards pronounced upon it, seems to have undergone some change much to the worse; but at all events, in a state of innocence, before any prejudice existed in the human mind against the reptile, it is easy to conceive that it must have been one of the most beautiful, or, at least, the most attractive and interesting of the brutal part of the creation. Its sagacity, its playfulness, its beautiful curvatures, its graceful movements and brilliant colours, could not fail to render it the favourite of the first pair, in a state in which pleasure rather than utility was sought from the inferior animals. By assuming its form, therefore, Satan would most easily secure the notice of his victim, and be enabled in the most graceful and seducing manner, to present her the fruit, which, as a spirit, he could not otherwise have done. Whether he spoke from the mouth of the serpent, or suggested the ideas as he now does, we are not expressly informed.

The attack too was skilfully directed against the female. From the narrative given us by the inspired writer, it appears highly probable that the woman was not created, when Adam received the command to abstain from the tree of knowledge, and that she therefore received the prohibition by means of her husband. This did not, it is true, lessen her obligation; for all mankind, except those who received the law from Mount Sinai, and those who heard the discourses of our Redeemer, are in a similar situation; but it certainly diminished the vividness of the impression, which the command might otherwise have made upon her mind. This circumstance, in conjunction with the fact, that she was alone during the time of the temptation, rendered her situation peculiarly favourable to the designs of the seducer.

He begins the assault by calling in question the divine veracity and the certainty of the consequences of disobedience. This method seems most likely to have succeeded in the mind of an innocent being, unacquainted with deceit. Conscious of no guile herself, and prone, as the uncorrupted mind naturally is, to believe the statements of others, she must have been perplexed by a statement directly contrary to what she believed to be the word of God. She still had, however, the divine command to direct her conduct, and she could not have hesitated which to

obey, had not a number of powerful feelings been artfully excited in favour of the assertions of the tempter. Her attention was engrossed and fixed upon his statements, not merely by the senses of sight and taste, but he skilfully awakened the desire of knowledge and love of aggrandisement—those powerful principles which seem to have been implanted in the breast of finite beings, in order to accelerate their ascent in the scale of intellectual and moral worth; and which, in the human breast, particularly in that of the female, exert a powerful influence. There was no want either of intellectual or moral power to resist the temptation; but the one was employed to mislead and neutralize the other. The understanding was first perplexed by false assertions, the sensations and feelings were awakened to promote the delusion, and thus, the resistance which conscience and prudence would have offered, was eluded. When the mutual influence of the understanding and the feelings is considered, the force of the temptation is obvious; and it is plain that none but a mind of a very superior order could have conducted it so skilfully. The indiscretion of the woman consisted in exposing herself in such circumstances, and in once listening to the insinuations of her seducer; but after she had allowed his arguments to influence her mind, and shake her belief of the divine word, or at least with-

draw her attention from it, she could scarcely fail to be beguiled, as she expressly terms it. While doubting of the divine veracity, and seeing that "the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise," it is not to be wondered that she took of the fruit thereof and did eat. Her fault was principally in not resisting the beginnings of evil, by repelling every insinuation respecting the veracity of God, and in not refusing to listen to any one who would dare to call it in question. The first step was not, it might be said, a crime, but rather an act of imprudence, resulting partly from the weakness and partly from the goodness of her nature ; but it was one of those steps which, as we daily see, smoothly and almost unconsciously lead to crime, ruin, and wretchedness. She was perfectly aware of her duty, and possessed sufficient power to discharge it ; but her own imprudence exposed her to temptation, and the villany and artifice of another hurried her into crime, of which indeed she was as yet ignorant.

When the woman was seduced, complete success was certain. Though the man, less ardent in his feelings, and possessed of a more powerful understanding, could not have been deceived by such artifices, when his wife had fallen, his fall was almost inevitable. The example and persuasion of one ardently beloved is scarcely to

be resisted ; and without unduly indulging fancy at the expense of the simple narrative of the inspired writer, it may be well conceived that the man, possessing all the native generosity of his unfallen nature, seeing a person so dear to him undone, and considering only the personal consequences of transgression, would not hesitate to palliate, at least, the crime of the object of his love, by sharing with her the guilt and the punishment.

Such is the simple account of the introduction of moral evil, given us, as it really was, by the Spirit of inspiration. It is the only account which is at once probable on the principles of the human constitution, and consistent with the attributes of the Deity, and with the well known phenomena of his moral administration. Satan and man were the sole authors of moral evil ; and of all the three, the seducer was obviously the most culpable. And, accordingly, the punishment denounced against him was the most severe, and that inflicted on them much lighter than they must have anticipated, and which, no doubt, they would have suffered had they sinned more presumptuously. The sentence which secured his final destruction was virtually a promise to them, that before they suffered the temporal death to which they had subjected themselves, they might be encouraged by the sure hope of an eternal life.

On reading the history of the fall given us in the sacred Scriptures, some one perhaps may feel disposed to ask, why was not Satan excluded from paradise? why were not the primitive pair apprised of the way in which Satan would assail them?—might not an angel have been sent to counteract his attempt? and many other queries of a similar nature. To answer these and a thousand such questions, which may be started respecting the most obvious subject, were the purest trifling. Why do the planets revolve from east to west? it may be asked—why has the earth but one moon? might there not be a greater number of planets in the solar system? To such inexplicable difficulties and objections, if any one should take a fancy to consider them such, the philosophy of Newton can afford no answer. It can only be said that, as these things are, they are very well; and that the Creator had no doubt wise ends in view in all his works, though his reasons are utterly unknown to us. The question, in like manner, respecting the introduction of moral evil, is not whether the Deity could not have employed a multitude of means to prevent the fall, but whether, in acting as He did, his conduct is consistent with the principles of justice. It is not how the Deity might have acted; but how he did act, that we are interested to know. He undoubtedly acted in a manner conformable to his infinite wisdom and

goodness; but since, with our limited knowledge, we cannot understand nor duly appreciate the wisdom and benevolence of his measures; the only question to which, as moral agents, we require an answer is, whether He acted on the principles of equity? That He acted with perfect equity is evident: He furnished man with the power of resisting temptation, and apprised him of the consequence of transgression; and on the established principles of justice, on which men act with approbation every day, nothing more could be required by a moral creature from his moral governor. There was no injustice done to man. He was not sacrificed to any consideration of expediency, as has been wildly imagined; but was treated in a manner perfectly consistent with the principles of immutable rectitude. He knew his duty, and was physically and morally able to perform it; and if he failed, he and his seducer were the sole authors of the crime, and to them alone the guilt is to be imputed. Moral evil does not arise, as bishop King strangely imagined, "from the very nature and constitution of created beings, and could not be avoided without a contradiction;" for that is manifestly untrue, as the condition of unfallen creatures demonstrates. God made all things at first in perfection: Satan primarily, and then the depraved heart of man have been the authors of all moral evil.

It is usually taught by theologians, in treating of this subject, that God *permits* the commission of moral evil: if, by the *permission* of God, it is meant that He does not interpose his physical power to hinder the perpetration of evil, the doctrine is certainly correct; for this just states the fact, that He governs his moral creatures by moral means, and does not, by the use of physical force, restrain their will and offer violence to their nature. But though in this sense of the term, permission, in which sense, indeed, it is most commonly employed, the doctrine is confessedly true, the expression itself has a tendency to mislead. In speaking of sin and obedience, we have reference to man in his relation to God not as a material being, but as a moral subject; and in this character, God has given no permission to commit sin. The Judge of all the earth can never give any permission to perpetrate moral evil. His immutable holiness renders this utterly impossible. The very constitution of all his moral creatures, as well as his authoritative command, forbids that abominable thing which God hates. The essence of sin consists in this, that it is done without the permission of God, and in direct opposition to his will. God, so far from permitting, authoritatively prohibits all moral evil, and by promises and threatenings, and all other means consistent with the relation to which He stands to man, seeks to prevent its commission;

and the guilt of the sinner consists in this, that in spite of the will of God, and notwithstanding all the motives which He addresses to his conscience, his love, his hopes, and his fears, he wilfully commits what his Creator expressly forbids. We would banish then the expression, God's permission of sin, as having a tendency to mislead us; and state the truth more correctly by saying, that moral evil was at first introduced to the world, and that all sins are now committed, by men and by devils, without the permission, and in direct opposition to the will of God. They presumptuously oppose their will, to the righteous and holy will of Him whom the principalities and powers, the thrones and dominions of heaven, find it their glory and happiness to obey. The sinful creature opposes and resists the will of the Creator, in the midst of his own universe; while He, waiting to be gracious even to the guilty, endures it a little, but will finally express his awful indignation in the fearful punishment of the impenitent transgressor.

Respecting the origin of moral evil, there is another doctrine which is sometimes maintained, on which, also, it may not be improper to offer a few remarks. It is admitted that all sin is in opposition to the revealed will of God, by which man is bound to regulate his conduct; but it is held that God has a *secret* will or purpose, by

which He brings about all events, sin as well as every thing else. This is one of the most unhallowed of those unhallowed attempts to explain what the Spirit of inspiration has not seen meet to reveal. For the sake of adding a little to our limited knowledge, or rather, more truly, to conceal our real ignorance, and gratify our vanity by knowledge falsely so called, this hypothesis would deny all the grand truths of Revelation, destroy the moral attributes of the Deity, and subvert all the grounds of the Christian's hope. Happily, besides being contradictory to the plainest statements of Scripture, and inconsistent with the facts of the case, it carries along with it its own refutation. If there be a *secret* will of God, how is it known to us? Who has heard the *secret* of God? Hast thou been the counsellor of the Eternal? Such preposterous attempts to conceal our ignorance, justify the prophet's account of the presumption and folly of man.—Man would be wise though born like the wild ass's colt.

It would indeed be uncandid to charge those who have held such a doctrine with its blasphemous consequences. It would make the God of truth a wise and a subtle being indeed, like the father of lies; but it would deny his holiness, his justice, and his veracity—those attributes which are no less essential to his nature than is the eternity of his existence, and which

render it so glorious a trust to all the intelligent and moral universe, that Jehovah, the Almighty God reigneth king for ever. When men wander beyond the sphere of their knowledge, they are necessarily involved in endless mazes of error ; and it must not be thought strange that, when they endeavour to escape one absurdity, they are plunged into another still more absurd. There are not a few to be found who would reject, with indignation and horror, the avowal of consequences which are most directly implied in the tenets which they hold.

But besides the absurdity of attempting to explain facts by principles which are confessedly unknown, the notion of a secret will of God is completely at variance with admitted truths, and with the most obvious doctrines of Scripture. If there be a truth which deserves to be considered an axiom in theology, it is the fact that God is true ; and hence, that He cannot declare that to be his will which in reality is not. Since, then, the physical and moral will of God, as was shown above, uniformly coincide, to imagine that God can have a secret purpose, involves the contradiction of having two opposite wills respecting the same thing. His ways indeed are unsearchable by us, and He may have a multitude of secret purposes respecting any object, but all of them must be consistent with the will which He has vouchsafed to reveal to us, unless we suppose the manifest con-

tradiction of the Divine Being willing against himself. What, therefore, the Spirit of revelation declares to be the divine will is in very deed the will of God who cannot lie. Let God be true, though every man a liar. His words are pure words, like silver tried and purified seven times. When He declares his will against sin, and solemnly prohibits the commission of it, He has no secret purpose to bring it about. We speak not of the impiety of so horrid a supposition ; it is an utter contradiction. The revealed will of God is in reality the will of Him whose ways are all just and true ; and any opposite will exists only in the disordered and corrupt imaginations of ignorant and foolish men, who would make God such an one as themselves. He is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with Him. He hateth all the workers of iniquity, and abhorreth the bloody and deceitful man. Such men act in most direct opposition to the will of the Most High ; and let them not please themselves with the idea, that God by any secret purpose favours their perpetration of crime. The only secret will, in which they have a momentous concern, is the *time* when he shall reward them according to their works, and inflict upon them those tremendous judgments which his revealed word declares to be the reward of sin.

It must be admitted indeed, that were one still

disposed to hold the opinion of a secret will of God, opposite to that which is revealed, he may derive, from the prescience and foreordination of God, a number of powerful arguments which seem to bring us to the conclusion, that God is the author of evil in a way inconsistent with his known attributes. We check the opponent who would force us into such a dilemma, by reminding him, that though his reasonings be legitimate, our knowledge is exceedingly limited, and his premises must surely be partial; for his conclusion is at variance with the statements of Scripture and acknowledged facts. "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man"—much less does He impel to sin by some secret exertion of power, as the doctrine of a secret will, if it mean any thing, must imply; "but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed."* And lust was not created by God; for it is the fruit of our own moral corruption, in consequence of the seduction of Satan.

It is true that sin actually takes place under the administration of God; and since He was the Creator of all things, He has been the author, directly or indirectly, of every event which takes place in his universe. But let us see in what sense He has been so; and in doing this, let us

* James i. 13, 14.

keep within the limits of our own world, to which alone our experience and information from Scripture extend, instead of wandering, as has been often done, on the dark mountains of vanity, in the world of conjecture.

Sin is actually committed in the world, and God has been the Creator of all things, are the facts on which our reasoning proceeds. Were we reasoning on these facts alone, we are forced to the conclusion that God is the author of evil as well as of good ; which is the conclusion at which unaided reason and a pseudo-philosophical theology have usually arrived. The Christian however looks to his Bible, and at once explains the difficulty, and corrects the reasonings of the philosopher. One important fact is here left out of the premises. God has been the Creator of all things ; but He created them all very good, and was not the Creator of *corrupted* man. He created man morally holy, and perfectly able to remain for ever in that condition. It was Satan alone, acting in opposition to the will of the Creator, who rendered man the corrupted being which he now is ; and who, therefore, with the beings whom he has seduced, is the only author of evil. God, by his act of creation, indeed, gave occasion to all the evil which has been produced ; but not in any way repugnant to perfect holiness. It is in the same manner as a man who has reared a house for the accommodation of his family,

is the cause of a burglary which has been committed in his premises. He has been the occasion of the crime, but he has been the innocent occasion, and is in truth the injured party: the thief alone is culpable. Had he certainly foreseen the evil, as the Creator, who knows the end from the beginning confessedly did, he was found to employ every lawful precaution to prevent the crime; but while he did so, he might still feel it right to prepare a house for his family, and, as a moral agent, he was bound to do his duty, whatever might be the conduct of others. Though he should foresee ten thousand crimes, and the misery of multitudes as the inevitable consequence of his conduct, if the measure be really his duty, he is bound to adopt it without regard to the result. No principle of expediency—no sacrifice of duty, can be admitted by a perfect moral agent. The only principle which must regulate his conduct is the consideration of the right and the wrong; and what is right must be performed. The case is precisely the same with the Father of the universe; for God and man, as moral agents, act upon the same principle. By endowing man with a moral nature, the Creator was bound, if we may so speak, to govern him by moral means; and the question, why did not God prevent sin? is a consideration, not of physical power, but of moral rectitude. The reasoning of Bayle and others, who from the

fact that the Divine Being had physical power to prevent sin, would prove Him the author of evil, is completely irrelevant and nugatory. The question is not, as was said, had He physical strength to prevent evil, but in acting as He did, did He act justly? Were the physical force of a moral agent to be the measure of his efforts; how absurd were the consequences? In multitudes of instances, a man certainly foresees that others will commit such and such crimes; but he never asks, have I physical force to hinder them, but have I a right to employ it? If he has not, he is content to employ all lawful and moral means to prevent the perpetration of the evil; and if these fail, he never feels himself guilty, though multitudes of crimes are committed which certainly he had power to prevent. Were he acting otherwise, he would quickly find himself the most criminal of all those whose crimes he sought to hinder; and the laws of the country and the common sense of mankind would unite to support the principle, that a moral agent must not regulate his actions by his physical power, but employ right means, as well as propose to himself a right end.

As then the Almighty's sufferance of sin is not to be made a question of physical power, neither must it be made by us, whose faculties are limited, a consideration of wisdom or goodness. We are able to perceive the justice of any action

of God towards us : not to estimate the benevolence or expediency of his measures. Actions, naked and isolated, may be perceived just or unjust ; but to discover the expediency or goodness of any action of the Deity, its effects on the universe and during eternity must be known, and a degree of knowledge therefore is necessary of which perhaps finite minds, or at least our very limited understandings are incapable. Even in the present state, however, we see as much of his administration as leaves little room to doubt, that all his measures are no less consistent with goodness and mercy than with the most impartial justice. In the economy of redemption, we behold all his attributes combined to overrule the wickedness of his fallen creatures, for the most gracious and glorious purposes ; and to bring out of evil, real not seeming evil, as the poet would insinuate, an amount of good of which the influence in the universe cannot be duly appreciated, till the multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stand before the throne, ascribing glory, and honour, and blessing, and thanksgiving, to Him that reigneth for ever and ever. Then will it appear to the complete satisfaction of every rational being, that God is infinitely benevolent and merciful, as well as just and true. His wisdom and mercy cannot, in the present state, always be duly estimated, nor in some cases apprehend-

ed : it is enough if it is found universally true, that He governs the world by no paltry principle of expediency, which would sacrifice one portion of his creation to promote the welfare of another ; but that justice and judgment are the eternal foundations of his throne.

The justice of the conduct of God respecting the fall of man has appeared manifest. A moral agent who knows his duty and has power to discharge it, can demand nothing more from a moral governor. The man who would deny this principle would prove himself guilty of injustice and villany ; for all the duties which he imposes upon others, and the services which he claims from them, proceed upon the truth of it. And indeed all the objections which are urged against the responsibility of man and the justice of the Deity, are founded so much on misconception of the nature of moral government, and of the character of moral agents, that they are utterly unworthy of notice. Their direct tendency is to degrade man from the high rank of the being who can think, judge, and act a part for himself in the universe, and whose destiny therefore was put into his own hands, to the irrational brute, made to obey the rein and the goad, till it sink into the inert and insensible mass from which it was formed.

To answer the question then, whence came evil in our world ? we return to the statement of

the sacred writer, God made man upright, but at the instigation and by the artifice of Satan, he has found out many inventions. This is an ultimate fact to our present knowledge and with our present means of information. It is one of those first principles which we can state as a fact, but cannot attempt to explain or assign any reason how or why it is. In so doing we imitate the natural philosopher, who when asked what is gravitation, can give no answer but such as amounts merely to the truth that there is such a principle as gravitation. Like all other powers of the same sort, it is known to him only by its effects ; from the observation of which he discovers the laws of its action and the measure of its intensity. By the just application of these laws, he is enabled to explain all the mechanical phenomena of the universe, and at one time, constructs a steam-engine, and at another, ascertains the path of a projectile or traces the orbit of a planet. Taking, in like manner, the fallen spirits as the principle of evil, we explain all the phenomena of the moral world consistently with the agency and responsibility of man, and with the moral attributes of the Creator. If we attempt to go beyond this fact, we are bewildered in a more perplexing labyrinth than were the physics of the schoolmen, with all their multiplicity of imaginary principles. Taking the fact as it is, without trying to explain it, and reason-

ing from it as the natural philosopher does from gravitation, all is obvious and satisfactory. Our reasonings then prove the world to be as it really is. God is proved holy, just, and merciful, the author of all good, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift. Devils and corrupted men are the authors of all moral evil, and, as such, are responsible to the great Judge, who will judge the world in righteousness and the people with truth.

We cannot wonder at the partiality which a distinguished French writer betrays for the doctrine of those ancient sects who held the existence of two opposite principles of good and evil.* Ridiculous as the doctrine became in their hands, when obscured by their numerous ab-

* This doctrine, as every body knows, was prevalent long before the time of the Manichees and other heretical sects in the early ages of Christianity. The older writers taught it more clearly and consistently, and it might not be difficult to trace it up to the traditions derived from our first progenitors. Not to mention other authors, every scholar recollects the celebrated passage in the *Odyssy*.

Ὁ ποποὶ δὶον δὴ νυ θεοὺς βροτῶι ἀΐτιωνται·

Ἐξ ἡμῶν γὰρ φασι κακ' ἰμμεῖναι· οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ

Σφῆσιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὑπερ μορὸν ἀλγὶ ἰχουσιν—*Lib. I, 32, 34.*

“How strange,” says Jupiter, “that mortals accuse the gods; for they say that we are the cause of evil, while they suffer the punishment of their own folly contrary to fate.” If we understand by *fate* the will of the Almighty which governs the moral universe, and which was originally expressed by the creation of man as a perfect moral being, the doctrine is strictly true. All evil is contrary to fate in this sense.

surditities, it is nothing but that of the sacred Scriptures, corrupted and disfigured ; and with respect to the origin and prevalence of evil in our world, it is practically correct. Since the creation of man there has been a good and an evil principle constantly at work, and a continual warfare maintained between them. The evil principle has been hitherto most prevalent, and has sometimes almost succeeded, as at the deluge, in expelling virtue from the earth. And even now the god of this world—the prince of the power of the air—the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, has the advantage in the conflict, and reigns absolute sovereign over the great majority of mankind, who are led by him captive at his will. It shall not however be so for ever. The author of evil is but the creature contending against the almighty Creator. Though Satan has hitherto prevailed, God has not been permitting sin, but waiting to be gracious, willing that his unhappy victims should come to repentance and obtain salvation, and when this merciful design is accomplished, vengeance will no longer tarry. There is a day appointed in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by Him whom He hath ordained. Then shall the wrath of God be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of devils and of men, and in sweeping for ever moral evil and its authors from the universe,

the Deity will give an awful proof to all his intelligent creatures, that though sinners have rendered Him and his works the occasions of evil, He is not its author, by any direct or secret purpose inconsistent with his revealed will ; and the real authors of it will then at length be convinced, that they, and they only, were the criminal perpetrators of the crimes for which they suffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

SECTION VII.

REVIEW OF PRESIDENT EDWARDS' ACCOUNT OF THE
FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

THE brief, but not, we trust, altogether unsatisfactory illustrations of some of the most important questions, involved in the inquiry respecting the liberty of man, which have been now offered, may serve to protect us from the belief of the fate of the Stoicks on the one hand, and of Epicurean contingency on the other ; and enable us to form our conceptions of the human agent as he really exists. It has not appeared necessary to refute a multitude of opinions which are entertained respecting some of the topics, or to answer a number of objections which may be started ; which, indeed, were as idle as, in the present age, to bring forward a formal refutation of the philosophy of Aristotle, or of the hypothesis of the vortices of Descartes. To guard us, however, still farther against some of the practical consequences into which certain views of the subject necessarily lead, it may not be unacceptable to examine a few of the principal opinions held

by writers on both sides of the controversy. And as President Edwards and Dr. Whitby may be justly considered to stand at the head of the writers of the opposite parties, we now propose to present some observations on the celebrated works of these distinguished authors. President Edwards' work first claims attention.

Before proceeding to examine the leading principle of this work, it may not be amiss to observe how judiciously the author has given us the true account of the mode of the determination of the will. "The will," says he, "always is as the greatest apparent good is," or as "what appears most agreeable."* He prefers this mode of expression to the more common phraseology, justly observing, that the "appearing most agreeable or pleasing to the mind, and the mind's preferring and choosing, seem hardly to be properly and perfectly distinct." He then enumerates a number of circumstances, both of the external motive and of the mind itself, which tend to render any action the most agreeable, and concludes the argument in support of his principle with the following powerful passage. "However, I think so much is certain, that volition, in no one instance that can be mentioned, is otherwise than the greatest apparent good is, in the manner which has been explained. The

* Part I. Sect. II.

choice of the mind never departs from that which, at that time, and with respect to the direct and immediate objects of that decision of the mind, appears most agreeable and pleasing, all things considered. If the immediate effects of the will are a man's own actions, then those actions which appear most agreeable to him he wills. If it be now most agreeable to him, all things considered, to walk, then he now wills to walk. If it be now, upon the whole of what at present appears to him, most agreeable to speak, then he chooses to speak ; if it suits him best to keep silence, then he chooses to keep silence. There is scarcely a plainer and more universal dictate of the sense and experience of mankind than that, when men act voluntarily and do what they please, then they do what suits them best, or what is most agreeable to them. To say that they do what they please or what pleases them, but yet they do what is most agreeable to them, is the same thing as to say that they do what they please but do not act their pleasure, and that is to say that they do what they please, and yet do not do what they please.”*

This reasoning is perfectly conclusive. To render any action the most agreeable it must be the object of the predominant desire : now from the analysis of volition, it was obvious that

the desire which, at the time, predominates uniformly involves the determination of the will ; and hence, as he himself has acutely hinted above, to appear most agreeable to the mind, and the mind to prefer or choose, are, in truth, identical, or at least, the one uniformly involves the other.

In establishing this conclusion, this acute metaphysician has not committed the mistake, into which some writers, who seem to follow him in other respects, have fallen. He evinces too great an acquaintance with the human mind to imagine, that men, in the present state of moral derangement, act uniformly under the guidance of their understanding. “ It will appear from these things,” says he “ that *in some sense*, the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding. But then the *understanding* must be taken in a large sense, as including the whole faculty of *perception* or *apprehension*, and not merely what is called *reason* or *judgment*. If, by the dictate of the understanding be meant what reason declares to be best, or most for the person’s happiness, taking in the whole of its duration, it is *not true that the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding*. Such a dictate of reason is quite a different matter from things appearing now most agreeable ; all things being put together which pertain to the mind’s present perceptions, apprehensions, or

ideas, in any respect. Although that dictate of reason, when it takes place, is one thing which is put into the scales, and is to be considered as a thing that has concern in the compound influence which moves and induces the will ; and is one thing that is to be considered in estimating the degree of that appearance of good which the will always follows, either as having its influence added to other things, or subtracted from them. When it remains with other things, then its weight is added to them, as put into the same scale ; but when it is against them, it is as a weight in the opposite scale, where it resists the influence of other things ; *yet its resistance is often overcome by their greater weight, and so the act of the will is determined in opposition to it.*"*

This is the correct statement of fact, which we have endeavoured to illustrate, Section IV. under the name of Moral Necessity, and which has been observed by moralists in all ages, and has given occasion for all the complaints of the folly and inconsistency of man. It is true that, in one sense, the judgment or understanding always approves of the volition, in as far as it is the most desirable and agreeable at the time, though, perhaps, neither right nor most advantageous upon the whole. But such approba-

* Part I. Sect. II.

tion is not strictly the judgment of the understanding; it is rather, as our author justly observes, a fact consequent upon the volition, which the understanding *perceives*; for the action or object of the volition is rendered the most agreeable, by causes independent of the judgment; and notwithstanding the pleasure which the action affords, the understanding, it may be, does not cease to condemn it as a crime.

Let us now examine the nature of the necessity which the work under consideration so ably establishes. After very judiciously explaining the common and proper meaning of the term, *necessity*, and others of a like import, and showing clearly that they are relative terms, always implying opposition, and that an action is necessary to us, when no endeavour or effort of ours can render it otherwise, he goes on to make the following excellent observations. “It follows from what has been observed, that when these terms *necessary, impossible, irresistible, &c.* are used in cases wherein no opposition, or insufficient will or endeavour, is supposed, or can be supposed, but the very nature of the supposed case itself excludes and denies any such opposition, will, or endeavour, these terms are then not used in their proper signification, but quite beside their use in common speech. The reason is manifest, namely, that in such cases we cannot use the words with reference to a supposable

opposition, will or endeavour. And, therefore, if any man use these terms in such cases, he either uses them nonsensically, or in some new sense, diverse from their original and proper meaning. As for instance, if a man should affirm after this manner, that it is *necessary* for a man and what *must* be, that a man should choose virtue rather than vice, during the time that he prefers virtue to vice ; and that it is a thing *impossible* and *irresistible*, that it should be otherwise than that he should have this choice, so long as this choice continues ; such a man would use the terms *must*, *irresistible*, &c. with perfect insignificance and nonsense, or in some new sense diverse from their common use ; which is with reference, as has been observed, to supposable opposition, unwillingness and resistance ; whereas here, the very supposition excludes and denies any such thing ; for the case supposed is that of being willing and choosing.”*

* Part I. Sect. III. Luther, too, was quite aware of the misapplication of the term necessity, and felt the injurious tendency of the word in this controversy. “*Optârim sane aliud,*” says he, “*melius vocabulum dari in hac disputatione quam hoc usitatum, Necessitas, quod non rectè dicitur, nec de divinâ neque de humanâ voluntate ; Est enim nimis ingrata et incongruæ significationis, pro hoc loco, quandam velut coactionem et omnino id quod contrarium est voluntati ingerens intellectui. De Servo Arbitrio.*” “I truly wish that in this controversy some more appropriate term were employed than the usual one *necessity*, which is applicable neither to the will of God nor man. It is of so harsh and incongruous a signification, when used here, suggesting a sort of coaction, and

This is admirable, and the true account of the nature of necessity, and is precisely what we attempted to illustrate, in the remarks which were offered on the principle of Mr. Hume. Where there is no irresistible opposition, there is no necessity. (When a voluntary agent carries his will into execution, he is physically free ; and when his will is opposed and resisted by a superior force, he is under necessity.) When, in like manner, a moral agent judges an action right and resolves to perform it, he enjoys moral liberty ; but when, on the other hand, by external excitement, appetite or disallowed passion, the dictate of his conscience is resisted, and he is impelled to act the part which he condemns, he is placed in a condition directly the opposite of moral freedom. In both cases, freedom, as was formerly shown, is the enjoyment of power ; necessity the result of weakness and opposition. Where there is no opposition to the peculiar agency of a being, there is no necessity ; and it is utterly nonsensical and absurd, as is justly observed, to take the mere fact of existence and call it by that term, and then to assure us that because a

what is altogether contrary to the nature of volition." It is earnestly to be hoped that writers on this subject will take the hint of Luther, and instead of this incongruous term *necessity*, employ the word *causation*, or *agency* ; and instead, therefore, of saying that man is under necessity, or philosophical necessity, rather say more correctly and elegantly, he is *an agent*.

being *is*, he is under hopeless necessity. Such contemptible insignificance and nonsense however has been dignified with the name of philosophy.

Had President Edwards therefore observed this just distinction, in the subsequent part of the discussion, he would have fully explained the whole subject of liberty; and it is much to be regretted, that a writer so able to illustrate this important subject was diverted from his proper object, by his desire to expose the absurdities of writers little worthy of his attention. Let us now see how far he has been induced, and apparently with his eyes open, to overlook his own principle in the establishment of universal necessity.

After stating the various significations which the phrase moral necessity assumes, he adds, "and sometimes by *moral necessity* is meant that necessity of connection and consequence, which arises from such moral causes, as the strength of inclination or motives, and the connection which there is in many cases between these, and such certain volitions and actions. And it is in this sense that I use the phrase, *moral necessity*, in the following discourse." As a counterpart to this he explains what is called natural or physical necessity as follows: "By *natural necessity*, as applied to man, I mean such necessity as men are under through the force of natural causes, as dis-

tinguished from what are called moral causes, such as habits and dispositions of the heart, and moral motives and inducements. Thus men placed in certain circumstances, are the subjects of particular sensation by necessity—they feel pain when their bodies are wounded ; they see objects presented before them in clear light when their eyes are opened,” &c.*

Respecting these two sorts of necessity, he very judiciously remarks, first, that moral necessity may be as absolute as natural necessity ; that is, the effect may be as perfectly connected with its moral cause as a natural effect with its natural cause ; and hence, secondly, that this distinction is founded not on any difference in the nature of the causation, or from the one being less natural than the other, but simply from the subjects in which they take place—the one necessity regarding mind, the other matter.

It is plain, then, by the definition above, that the necessity, both moral and physical, of President Edwards, is exactly the philosophical necessity or causation of Mr. Hume, which, we saw, involves both liberty and necessity, and is equally essential to the existence of either. Whether a voluntary agent be able to carry his volition into effect or not, the result is determined by the immutable laws of mechanical philosophy ; and

whether or not the moral agent do what he knows to be right and remain innocent, or act against his conscience and render himself guilty, the effect is equally that of the dispositions, inclinations, and desires of the mind, acting on the sure principles of its partially corrupted nature. Moral causes, that is, not, as the language of the President might seem to suggest, inclinations and motives as distinct entities, but, as Leibnitz clearly understood, the mind itself perceiving and desiring different objects, are as necessarily and invariably connected with their effects as the causes of the physical world. It is in this that the power of the agent consists, and on which consequently his liberty depends. It is simply the fact, that he *is an agent*; which alone, therefore, the universal establishment of moral causation proves. The true question of liberty and necessity is entirely set aside. In all cases, both of liberty and necessity, moral causation takes place; but we must know something more, before any thing can be determined regarding that real necessity, which is the consequence of irresistible opposition, and of the weakness of the agent who labours under it. We have not to inquire, whether any moral effect has a cause, but whether this cause acts for or against the intelligent man—whether the effect is *his own approved act*, or the effect of another cause acting in opposition to his understanding. If his own intel-

lectual power produces the effect, he is free ; if the effect be the result of irresistible opposition and of inability on his part to oppose it, he is under necessity.

The President was perfectly aware that he had left the subject of real necessity, and takes no undue advantage of his reader. “ It must be observed,” says he, “ that in what has been explained as signified by the name of *moral necessity*, the word *necessity* is not used according to the original design and meaning of the word ; for, as was observed before, such terms, necessary, impossible, &c. in common speech, and in their most proper sense, are always relative, having reference to some supposable opposition or endeavour that is insufficient.” * He seems to have been led to misapply the term, and to lay himself open to the charge of using it with “ insignificance and nonsense,” in the way that most other writers have been—by regarding too exclusively the external and physical condition of man, without sufficiently considering his nature, as a moral and intelligent being. Hence he imagines that no opposition can take place in any instance of moral necessity. “ No opposition, or contrary will and endeavour, is supposable in the case of moral necessity, which is a certainty and inclination of the will itself, which

* Part I. Sect. IV.

does not admit of the supposition of a will to oppose and resist it. For it is absurd to suppose the same individual will to oppose itself, in its present act; or the present choice to be opposite to, and resisting present choice—as absurd as it is to talk of two contrary motions, in the same moving body, at the same time. And therefore the very case supposed never admits of any trial, whether an opposing or resisting will can overcome this necessity.” *

There can, indeed, be no opposition of will to will and of choice to choice, in the mind of an individual, in the same direct manner as the will of one agent is opposed to that of another; for the very supposition, as our author states, is inconsistent with the idea of voluntary agency, and this is not the opposition which is peculiar to man as a moral being. The opposition which man, in this character, experiences, is that which his judgment and his approved feelings offer to his disapproved and guilty volitions; and in every instance of moral necessity, according to the definition of Edwards, that is, in every instance of moral causation, this opposition may or may not take place, and as it does or does not, is the man under real moral necessity or in a state of moral freedom. When the understanding and the conscience sanction a volition, and which, conse-

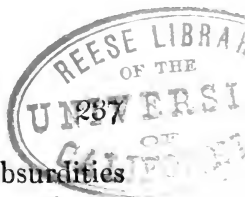
quently, acts in concurrence with the approved feeling, no possible opposition, at least no irresistible opposition can be offered, and the man is therefore morally free. But when the conscience condemns a desire, and the approved feelings resist it, a violent mental struggle takes place between the opposite wishes; and if the dictates of the conscience and the better feelings are resisted by the forbidden desire, and the volition fixed in opposition to them, the man labours under a real moral necessity. In such a case, there is as truly a moral conflict and a real moral opposition, in the breast of the individual, as there is a physical struggle and external opposition when one man endeavours by force to resist the will of another. Feeling is opposed to feeling, and desire struggles with desire; and if the feelings and desires which the understanding approves are resisted and overcome by those which it condemns, the moral agent is placed under a moral necessity as truly as the voluntary agent is under a physical necessity, when the superior strength of an antagonist violently resists and hinders the execution of his will. All this the President fully and clearly states in numerous passages of his valuable works, though he did not distinctly perceive its bearing on the subject of free will. Not to adduce other quotations, a passage already mentioned exhibits very explicitly the whole truth. "When the understanding

concurs with other things, then its weight is added to them as put into the same scale ; but when it is against them, it is as a weight to the opposite scale where it resists the influence of other things, *yet its resistance is often overcome by their greater weight, and so the act of the will is determined in opposition to it.*"

It is, however, somewhat unaccountable, that so acute an observer and so clear a reasoner as President Edwards should have overlooked this moral opposition, especially after he had distinctly recognised it. It gives rise to a distinction vastly more important, as was hinted before, than the physical opposition which is the cause of animal or voluntary necessity. It is this moral opposition and resistance which is the source of the distinction of guilty and innocent, vicious and virtuous, sinful and holy ; and long after all the temporary inconvenience of physical weakness and animal necessity are forgotten, the consequences of this distinction will be experienced, in the state of inconceivable felicity or of hopeless misery in which the righteous Judge will fix his moral creatures for eternity. To overlook such a distinction, therefore, in treating of moral necessity, is, in truth, to overlook the most important and momentous state which the agency of a moral being exhibits, and entirely to set aside the real subject of inquiry; for without mo-

ral resistance and opposition there is indeed no moral necessity.

It is unnecessary to offer any further remarks on a subject already so evident. It is perfectly obvious, that President Edwards has left the subject of liberty and necessity exactly where it was left by Mr. Hume, having established the universality of causation as certainly in the moral world as it is admitted to be in the physical, but having determined literally nothing respecting real necessity. Nay, according to his own correct definition of necessity, he has established rather the universality of moral freedom ; for were there no irresistible moral opposition, there could be no moral necessity. In making these remarks, however, it is not the intention to throw any blame upon the author. He has given us clear and correct definitions of what he meant to establish, and has honestly proceeded upon them, without taking any uncandid advantage of the ambiguity of words ; and if, in some respects, he misleads his reader, it is only because he himself was misled. The professed object of his work was not to treat of liberty and necessity, properly so called, but to refute the prevailing notions of a certain imaginary freedom of will, which was falsely deemed essential to moral agency and responsibility ; and he has completely and most triumphantly succeeded. In establishing the universality of moral causation, he has for ever



swept away all the fantastic mass of absurdities maintained by his opponents, and has clearly exhibited the only solid and even possible foundation of moral freedom, in demonstrating the fact, that man is a moral agent, which they virtually deny, by the supposition that contingency and indifference are essential to moral agency and responsibility. These and all such monstrous conceptions he completely explodes; and exhibits man just as he is—a voluntary and moral agent, who so long as he retains his present constitution and the powers which render him what he is, will necessarily act upon the principles of his being, from which he cannot possibly escape, without divesting himself of his nature.

Let us now see the practical consequences of President Edwards' doctrine of the universality of moral necessity. The only liberty which he holds man to possess is the power of acting as he *wills, chooses, pleases or feels most agreeable*. These terms, it must be admitted, are somewhat ambiguous, and are used with various latitudes of signification; but, as he employs them, they must be considered to express the fact, that man is a voluntary agent, or regulates his actions by his volitions. When he does so, he is allowed by Edwards to be free; but when he is resisted and restrained by irresistible physical force, he is under necessity in the proper sense of the term.

This, it will be recollected, was the opinion

of Mr. Hume, who granted that thus far there is a real distinction in the condition of the human agent, and that if the one state is necessity, the other may be termed liberty. But this wily sceptic, with a head as clear as that of Satan and a heart as bad, instantly discovered that if this is the whole of human liberty, there can be no moral obligation ; and hence in his attempt to subvert the morals and religion of the country, he was zealous to maintain that this is the whole freedom enjoyed by man. Accordingly, the work of Edwards, as is well known, was a great subject of triumph to Hume and his disciples ; for though that author clearly demonstrated the consistency of moral obligation with the moral necessity which he held, his arguments, derived from Scripture and the common sense of mankind, were pointless to the mind of a discerning sceptic, who was ignorant of the limits of human knowledge—the first qualification of a true philosopher, and who besides facts, sought the reasons of them. The will itself is that which, by the law of God, we are enjoined to regulate, or in the words of Edwards, “ The being of a good will is the most proper, direct, and immediate subject of command ; and if this cannot be prescribed or required by command or precept, nothing can ; for other things can be required no otherwise than as they depend upon, and are the fruits of a good

will.”* It directly follows, therefore, that if the only liberty possessed by man is the power of doing as he pleases, he cannot be the subject of moral obligation, but is in the same condition as the brutes, which not less than he do as they please or as they find most agreeable. The truth of this conclusion is put in a strong light by the President’s own statements. He holds “that natural necessity is wholly inconsistent with just praise or blame;”† and goes further with this principle than perhaps many Calvinists may feel disposed to accompany him, saying, that “it is a plain dictate of the sense of all mankind, that natural necessity and impossibility take away all blame and praise; and, therefore, that the nearer approach is to these through previous *propensity* or difficulty, so praise and blame are proportionably *diminished*.”‡ On this principle then it directly and irresistibly follows, that if Mr. Hume be successful in proving the ability to do as we will the whole of human liberty, he at once overthrows all moral responsibility and natural religion, and proves the gospel of our salvation to be a most ridiculous delusion of the weak and enthusiastic, or a subtle device of the churchman to procure for himself a good living, while the villain cloaks his base and mercenary motives under loud pretensions of zeal for the welfare of souls.

* Part III. Sect. IV. † Part IV. Sect. III. ‡ Part IV. Sect. IV.

President Edwards, it is true, most satisfactorily demonstrated the consistency of moral obligation with, or more truly the impossibility of it without, the necessity which he so successfully establishes; but it is by tacitly admitting the principle which he professes to refute. He justly rejects the self-determining power of the will, as a contradiction, or perhaps, in truth, rather a contradictory expression; but he is compelled to allow the human agent a self-determining power of some sort, and accordingly proceeds implicitly upon it in all his arguments in support of responsibility. It is needless to mention the instances, which he adduces, of perfect beings, as our Saviour, all of whom are moral beings solely by the circumstance, that they have the power of regulating their own wills, and whose case proves only the fact without explaining the reason of it. "The idea," says he, "which the common people, through all ages and nations, have of faultiness, I suppose to be plainly this: *A person's being or doing wrong with his own will or pleasure*, containing these two things: First, *his doing wrong when he does as he pleases*; second, *his pleasures being wrong*; or, in other words, perhaps more intelligibly expressing their notion, *A person having his heart wrong, and doing wrong from his heart*: And this is the sum total of the matter."*

* Part IV. Sect. IV.

This most undoubtedly involves the whole matter; for the truth which is the basis of obligation, if not prominently brought forward, is directly implied. The notion of one's pleasure and will being *wrong* implies, as every one perceives, the possession of an understanding capable of perceiving the *right* and the *wrong*, and hence of determining the volition according to the former or against the latter. This is no less a principle of the common sense of mankind, and is that on which they proceed in all their moral judgments.

All this the President readily admits, and by no means denies that the volitions are determined by the last dictate of the understanding; yet strange as it may seem, so much was he haunted by the dread of a self-determining power, that when his opponents bring forward the same truth, attended, it is true, with a number of absurdities and contradictory expressions and explanations, —and view it in its bearing on the question of liberty, he instantly attempts to deny and evade it. “They say,” says he, “unless the soul has a self-determining power, it has no power of action,—if its volitions be not caused by itself, but are excited and determined by some extrinsic cause, they cannot be the soul's own acts; and that the soul cannot be active, but must be wholly passive, in those effects which it is the *subject* of *necessarily*, and not from its own determina-

tion.”* Is not this the true account of the matter? Is the mind’s perception of right and wrong its own act? Is not the understanding an essential part of the man? If not, are his ideas separate entities; or what other agent determines for him his volition? Yet this very just and accurate account of human agency the President treats as monstrous absurdity and nonsense: but it must be remembered that the work from which it is taken contains very much which is entitled to this character; and though the author speaks good sense, when he begins to explain his meaning, he makes it intolerable nonsense.

Though therefore the fancy of the self-determining power of the will must be abandoned, as a misconception, *the man’s self-determining power over his will* must be substituted in its stead, as the ground of moral obligation. Had Edwards, after so ably exposing the inconsistency of his antagonists, pointed out the true self-determining principle possessed by man, and explained the relation of the understanding to moral freedom, he would have presented a correct view of the subject, and saved himself from being made the instrument of abetting infidels, in their assaults on Christianity. Mr. Hume was too acute not to perceive that he had caught the religionist in his own snare; and there is no wonder that Edwards’ work was

so well received by the sceptics of those times. He did indeed, as has been stated, establish moral obligation ; but he was obliged to have recourse to the Scriptures and the common sense of mankind, and could not defend it by his philosophy. When he leaves the testimony of Scripture and vulgar experience, both of which are incredible in the judgment of such characters as Mr. Hume ; instead of the clear, right-forward, overbearing expounder of truth, he unwittingly becomes the confused, evasive, imbecile sophist. It would exhaust the patience of the reader to point out the misconception of the arguments which he employs to support moral obligation, but we may be allowed just to glance at one of them as a specimen. He endeavours to show that the viciousness and virtuousness of actions consists not in their cause but in their nature. This is in one sense true, but not in a way that supports his argument. We will not insist upon the consideration, that in the strict and philosophical sense, viciousness or virtuousness does not belong to actions at all, but are the qualities of the agent whose actions they are ; and therefore, to say that these qualities belong to actions but not to their causes, that is,—if it has any meaning, which appears somewhat doubtful,—to the agents which perform them, is a manifest contradiction, inconsistent with the universal belief of mankind, who always conceive that it is the agent who is

virtuous or vicious. But to employ a more popular argument, the vicious feelings, as anger, revenge, covetous, &c. are in themselves the same, there is no reason to doubt, in brutes, and certainly precisely the same in idiots; yet nobody supposes, and President Edwards himself, on his own principle, that natural necessity frees from blame, does not suppose, that an utter idiot in indulging these feelings is morally guilty. The cause of this universal belief is obvious. It is not the nature of the feeling merely which renders a man guilty or praiseworthy, but the nature of the feeling combined with the fact, that he has the power of perceiving the nature of his feelings, and consequently of suppressing those which he judges wrong, and of indulging those which he considers right. When this power is pre-supposed, as it universally is, the nature of the feelings then constitutes the guilt or merit of the man, but not otherwise. The *reductio ad absurdum* by which he struggles to prop his argument is irrelevant, in as much as it does not establish his own opinion, though it completely refutes that of his opponent.

It is rather awkward, one can scarcely but remark, to see so sound a reasoner as President Edwards guilty of a sophism. In light subjects indeed, it is not unpleasing to behold a grave philosopher engage with all earnestness to roll the fabled stone up the mountain; for it pro-

duces an agreeable feeling of the equality men, and a conviction that the greatest have no cause to be vain, nor the weakest any reason to crouch under the consciousness of insignificance. But in subjects whose consequences are so momentous as that of free will, it is distressing to contemplate an honest lover of knowledge, and particularly a minister of truth, supporting principles which men such as Hume should feel any interest to espouse. But although, as simple philosophers, their doctrine exactly coincides and tends to the same dangerous practical conclusion, we regard the men with very different emotions. We love Edwards and regret his mistakes; for we see him honest in defence of what he considered truth, and important to the welfare of mankind. We detest Hume, whose excessive vanity led him to support ridiculous paradoxes, and deny truths which, even were they false, the truly benevolent sceptic would not seek to disprove, and thereby destroy the most efficient means of rendering men more noble and happy beings, at least in the present life, although, as he suspects, they might not preserve them from annihilation in the future. A generous man would not wantonly oppress and check the growth of a fine animal, with which the sentient nature gives him a community of sympathy: how detestable the wretch, and how worthy to be held up, by every man who

fears his God and loves his country, as the object of most implacable public execration, who with a cold-hearted and villanous scepticism, and under the mask of a friend of science, would blast the present happiness of nations by corrupting the public morals, and extinguish their hopes for eternity? The candid reader will not, at least, harshly condemn me if I add a prayer; and I do it with the most assured faith, for its object is what the divine veracity has been long pledged to perform—May the *mercy* of God, ere long, sweep such characters utterly from the earth.

To guard us then against the foolish conclusions and abominable conduct of sceptics, let us describe man as he really is, an agent who, in the exercise of conscience, possesses a self-determining power over his own will; and that as those whom Edwards opposes maintain, the motives, considered as external things, are purely passive, and cannot influence the will of the man till he has exerted his mental activity in perceiving the relations in which they stand to himself. Thus we can urge home moral obligation upon the heart even of a defender of the universe of impressions and ideas; for he cannot deny it, as a matter of consciousness, that he judges some things right and proper and other things wrong, and that his volitions are determined according to these perceptions. The divine law commands no impossibilities. The Scriptures clearly lay it

down, as was seen, that if a man is invincibly ignorant of any duty, he is under no moral obligation, and contracts no guilt by the omission of it. But if he *know* one thing to be right and another wrong, let him refuse to act upon this perception at his peril. His conscience will, one time or other, rise up in might, and drag him, a convicted and degraded culprit, before the judgment seat of God.

SECTION VIII.

REVIEW OF DR. WHITBY'S DISCOURSE OF THE
FREEDOM OF THE WILL OF MAN.

WE next proceed to examine the opinions held on the opposite side of this controversy ; and it will be found that there is greater difference in the character of the writers than in the opinions which they hold. Edwards, clear and accurate, like a hardy and skilful veteran, calmly secures his ground wherever he advances : Whitby, not less able, but incorrect and impetuous, forces his way through the thickest of the enemy, but is enveloped in smoke and confusion.—Edwards is right, so far as he goes, but his view is partial, and is therefore as dangerous as error, in deriving practical conclusions : Whitby is right in his general principle, but overlooks the exceptions which, in some instances, are more numerous than the effects which follow the general law. The practical conclusion drawn from the doctrine of the one, denies moral obligation, and hence implicitly the truth of all religion : the conclusion from that of the

other subverts the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, in which consists all its excellency. Thus the result has been, what has not been unusual among theological controversialists, in their hardly zeal to defend truth, they have cruelly strangled her between them. The correctness of these remarks we shall presently ascertain.

Dr. Whitby, in his Discourse of the Freedom of the Will, attempts to establish his principle of liberty, by general arguments, without entering deeply into the metaphysics of his subject. He derives his evidence from three sources : the testimony of the sacred Scriptures, general reasonings from admitted truths, and the writings of the fathers of the Christian church. It is not the intention to pursue his reasonings through the mass of evidence of this sort which he brings forward, but to take up his principal conclusions, and examine them on the principles of mental philosophy, and ascertain how far they are consistent with the phenomena of the human mind, which, as the work of God, is not, when candidly interrogated, less correct in the statement of facts than his word.

If the object of this discourse be considered, as it certainly seems intended, to prove the reality of that moral freedom which is peculiar to man, the Doctor has completely succeeded in his design, and has done just what we have attempted to do in the Second Section of the present Es-

say. He is chargeable, indeed, with a number of inaccuracies in point of philosophy, as Edwards has shown, and does not always observe the distinction between animal and moral freedom, but occasionally says of the one what can be truly affirmed only of the other ; and, hence, while he defines a liberty which is nowhere to be found but in the imagination of the writer, he brings forward a text to prove another, and reasons from it as if it were a third. In no writer do we more sensibly feel the absence of correct definition, and perceive the justness of the sarcastic remark of Luther, respecting writers of this sort. “It is not enough,” says he, “to say there is a power, there is a power, (as they are perpetually repeating), there is a power of free will ; for what is more easily uttered ; nor is this the practice of the most learned and distinguished philosopher of all ages ; but, to use the words of a German proverb, let them name the child,—let them define what this power is,—its effects, its susceptibilities, its properties.* By the want of correct definition, and by not always attending to the definitions which he has given us, the Doctor has been led into all the

* Non enim satis est dicere, est vis, est vis, est vis, quædam liberi arbitrii ; quid enim dicitur facilius ? Nec hoc virorum eruditissimorum et sanctissimorum tot sæculis approbatorum. Sed nominandus est infans, ut aiunt Germanico proverbio,—definendum est quæ sit illa vis, quid faciat, quid patiat, quid accadat.—*De Servo Arbitrio.*

inconsistencies which his work exhibits. Such mistakes, however, as he has committed, are not peculiar to one side of the question, and might have been expected from an author who, though he clearly saw the consequences of one view of his subject, was unacquainted with the subject itself. Notwithstanding all his inconsistencies, his general reasonings remain unaffected, and are perfectly conclusive in confutation of that necessity, which, as he justly conceived, leads directly to fatalism ; and he is well entitled, therefore, to the gratitude of every friend of Christianity, for having so ably and successfully maintained at once the true dignity of a moral being, and the ground of his moral obligation.

The foundation of his arguments, as well as the principal mistake into which he falls, is stated as follows : “ Again what makes the will choose, is something approved by the understanding, and consequently appearing to the soul as good ; and whatsoever it refuseth is something represented to the understanding, and so appearing to the will, as evil. * * • Wherefore, to say that evidence proposed, apprehended, and considered, is not sufficient to make the understanding to approve, or that the greatest good proposed, the greatest evil threatened, when equally believed and reflected on, is not sufficient to engage the will to choose the good and refuse the evil, is in effect to say, that which alone doth move the

will to choose or to refuse is not sufficient to engage it so to do—that which alone is requisite to make one understand and approve is not sufficient to do so, which being contradictory to itself, must of necessity be false.”*

There are in this passage, evidently two distinct questions blended together, on the separation of which the whole question of moral liberty or necessity depends. They are the mode in which the assent or approbation of the understanding is obtained, and that in which the will is determined. With respect to the former, there is no difference of opinion. Evidence considered and apprehended is universally sufficient to make the understanding to approve; and it were a contradiction in terms to affirm, that a man apprehends the evidence of a truth which yet he does not believe to be true.

With respect to the second question, as a *general* principle, the Doctor is also right. In the present condition of man, it is the general law of mind, that the perception of the greatest good or evil determines the will; and were men perfect beings, it would no doubt be the universal law of their intellectual nature. That it is not so however in point of fact, we trust we made sufficiently evident in the Fourth Section. It was there shown in what respect the understand-

* Discourse of Sufficient and Effectual [Grace, chap. I. § 3.

ing universally approves of all the volitions, namely, in their being the most agreeable at the time, and hence their object is felt to be the greatest good to the sentient and voluntary being ; but it was at the same time demonstrated, that the intelligent being often disapproves of his own volitions and actions, as not the most advantageous upon the whole, and frequently condemns them as morally wrong. This indeed the Doctor himself admits, as he must have done, had he regarded his own consciousness. His reasonings, in several parts of his discourses, proceed upon the supposition ; and it is one of his best arguments against the irresistibility of grace, that “ even the regenerate too often act against *the highest motives and the most powerful persuasions ;*” and hence justly concludes, that otherwise they could not be guilty of sin. His definition of freedom too, is, in reality, nothing but a statement of this fact.

“ The freedom of the will,” says he, “ in this state of trial and temptation, cannot consist with a determination to one, viz. on the one hand, in a determination to good only, by the efficacy of divine grace, infallibly or unfrustrably inducing to that operation, or engaging man, in respect of the divine appointment, infallibly and certainly to act so that he cannot fail of acting, &c. Nor can this liberty consist with the contrary determination to one, viz. with an

incapacity in man, through the fall, to do good but evil only.”* We do not mean, ~~let it be recollected~~, to connect the question in any way with that of predestination; but that man, in the present state, is not infallibly and uniformly determined either to good or evil is a matter of fact; and the Doctor must be here considered to give the true account of the present condition of human nature. Whether this be a correct definition of freedom is a very different question. He candidly admits, that this liberty is no perfection of human nature; and it is plain, from what has been said in the foregoing sections, that it is the state of a fallen being, like man, containing a mixture of good and evil—sometimes enjoying liberty, sometimes labouring under necessity. For a moral being to be free, he must be uniformly and invariably determined to do good, and to do good alone; so far as he is determined to evil, he is to be considered in a state of moral enthrallment.

But, omitting the consideration of the incorrectness of this definition, and the mistake of conceiving such a liberty necessary to a state of trial, with the futility of all the reasonings grounded on such a supposition, let us see how it agrees with the principle laid down, in the Discourse of Sufficient Grace, respecting the determination of the will.

* Discourse of the Freedom of the Will of Man, chap. I. § 3.

The indifference which is supposed in this definition is of two sorts, which may be termed *sentient* and *intellectual* indifference, as it regards the will or the understanding, answering to the two species of liberty which man enjoys, as a voluntary or moral agent. When two objects are presented to a man's choice, he is in a state of *sentient* indifference, when he has no desire for either the one or the other. This state of mind is very frequent; but as it gives rise to no volition, and leads to no action, it is not to be taken notice of in any inquiry respecting animal or voluntary freedom, in which action is always implied. Before the man can enjoy his freedom he must get rid of this indifference, and be desirous of exerting his physical power.

The other sort of indifference respects the understanding and not the volition. When, for instance, a man desires an apple, and a number equally good are presented to him, he judges them, perhaps, all alike, and is perfectly indifferent which he takes. He does not, however, remain inactive, as the schoolmen foolishly imagined, and refuse to take his apple, until he obtain a sufficient reason for preferring one to another. Though he sees no ground of preference, he is determined to have an apple; and as a voluntary being, he takes one accordingly, without needing to be freed from the *intellec-*

tual indifference which he feels respecting the superiority of the one to the other. There is no indifference in his will, though there is in his understanding; and he does not hesitate a moment to gratify his desire. This state of mind also is frequently experienced. It often gives rise to that state of doubt and perplexity, in which a man, when the objects of his choice are complex and important, experiences so much difficulty in coming to a final determination. In moral objects, however, to which alone the Doctor's discourse can be reasonably supposed to have any reference, for he is treating of man as a religious and moral being, such a state of mind has no place. In things which are neither right nor wrong, indifference may be felt, and man, as a prudential being, may reason and doubt about the result of the measures which he has the choice of adopting; but if, as a moral being, he perceives one action to be right and another to be wrong, all intellectual indifference is at once precluded. Along with the very perception of the right or the wrong, he is convinced that he should do the one and forbear the other. He may indeed feel, on some occasions, uncertain whether the action is really wrong, but even then his conscience convinces him, that he is bound to forbear till he obtain thorough information. If he hesitate to do what he perceives to be right, or doubt whether he

may not do what he knows to be wrong, he is then indeed in a state of voluntary indifference; but his understanding, so far from being indifferent, condemns him already as guilty of sin. Whatever he may desire and whatever he may do, he is aware that what is right ought to be done, and what is wrong ought to be foreborne. There is no intellectual indifference in a case of this nature, and if there is any voluntary indifference, the man is self-condemned, and is under the influence of a real moral necessity.

Were the approbation of the understanding then, according to Dr. Whitby, the only cause of the volition, man would be infallibly and uniformly determined to good and to good only, and be deprived of that liberty for which the Doctor contends, or rather, he should have said, be restored to his original and perfect moral freedom. He would always do what he knew to be right, and forbear to do what he knew to be wrong. He might indeed violate a law with which he was utterly unacquainted; but this would be no exception, and as we have seen implies no guilt. Man would obey according to the full extent of his knowledge, and do nothing which he suspected to be wrong. The terms *unfrustrable* and *infallible*, may appear somewhat formidable, but no feebler epithets could be employed to characterize the obedience of a moral being, were he to act only upon the dictates of his understanding.

The law of gravitation may be suspended, and the planets may be arrested in their course, as we know they have been by the power of the Creator, but so long as these laws are allowed to operate, all bodies infallibly and unfrustrably tend towards the centre of the earth. In like manner, the constitution of man may be altered, but so long as it remains as it is, if Dr. Whitby's principle be true, he will be *uniformly* and *infallibly* determined to good, and be utterly incapable of committing any known sin. We do not say merely that this would be the case had he remained a perfect being, but that he could not possibly have fallen from his first estate; for we know he did so, and could do so, only by doing what he knew to be wrong. Had his will been determined only by the approbation of his understanding, he had remained perfect and sinless to the present time, and through the endless duration of eternity.

Dr. Whitby, therefore, must either change his definition of liberty, or renounce his principle respecting the determination of the will. The former cannot be rejected, for although utterly false as an account of liberty, it is perfectly true as a description of the present moral condition of man—a depraved being, partly free and partly enslaved. The latter must be rejected, and with it the proudest and most triumphant of his arguments in his *Discourse of Free Will*, as well as

in that of Sufficient and Effectual Grace, fall at once to the ground. The principles of these two discourses are utterly incompatible. If you admit the principle of the discourse of Grace, his Free Will, on his own principle, is proved nothing but the most invincible and unfrustrable necessity. His principle respecting the determination of the will, can be held not as universal but as general, admitting of numerous exceptions. Were his discourse, therefore, intended, as was formerly hinted, to establish the doctrine of freedom generally against the fatalist, it would have been completely successful; but as intended for the controversial object which its author had in view, it is a total failure, and a most unmeaning misconception. His opponents, at least those of them who understand the subject, freely admit his general principle, and rest their own conclusions on the acknowledged exceptions. In vain then are all arguments, texts of Scripture, and quotations from the ancient fathers. A thousand perverted texts, and the authority of ten thousand fathers, who, indeed, were generally ignorant of the subject and speak at random, will never disprove a matter of fact. Admitting them all to be right respecting the general principle, the opponent brings forward his exceptions as matters of fact, and their testimony goes for nothing, and the Doctor's reasonings founded upon them appear ridiculous. He ar-

gues not more correctly than were a native of Siberia to attempt to persuade us that all mankind possess a complexion as fair as his own. He might bring forward all the millions of the prolific north in proof of his assertion, declare it impossible and absurd in the extreme to reject such an amount of evidence, and congratulating himself upon his superior strength of intellect, he might imagine that the knowledge of his more civilized neighbours serves only to deprive them of common sense, and renders them unfit to be reasoned with ; and to appease his rising indignation at our incorrigible stupidity, we might admit that mankind originally were white, and that a vast proportion of them are not black, but we could not cease to remember the wretched native of Africa scorched by a vertical sun. While the Doctor assures us that what fixes the volition is something approved by the understanding, and consequently appearing to the soul as good, and that it is an utter contradiction to suppose it otherwise, we recollect that we are those very contradictory beings, and have often known our duty and have failed to perform it.

The remarks which have now been offered may be sufficient to enable the student with ease to distinguish the true from the false, in the mass of important truth and pernicious error which Dr. Whitby's Discourse on Free Will exhibits. It would be altogether out of place to examine all the religious bearings of the subject, and to enter

into the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians. The Doctor is very liberal in charging his opponents with absurdity and contradiction, and perhaps the writers to whom he alludes have given some occasion for his animadversions. But it were as unfair to judge of a system by the mistakes of its defenders, as it were foolish to attempt to justify them. Some of the Calvinistic writers have fallen into an error just the opposite of Dr. Whitby's, as absurd, perhaps, but not so dangerous, and have maintained the exception to a general law to be the law itself, while he has considered the general law universal. They would make man a demon, as he justly says, and he would make him a perfect being. It is to be urged, however, in their defence, that if the controversy between the parties regard the state of man simply in relation to God, which it certainly does, the exception on which their argument rests is then the universal principle. The natural man acts not from love to God, and in so far is totally depraved. But without entering formally into the dispute, it may be permitted us simply to state the practical conclusions which are directly deducible from the principles which have just come under review, especially since, at the present time, the same partial views of human nature, and consequently the same false philosophy is in danger of corrupting our theology, and

of perplexing and enfeebling the practical Christian in the same proportion as it furnishes endless matter of dispute to the mere theologian. When religious controversy grows warm in the schools, the gospel grows cold in the heart and fruitless in the pulpit.

From Dr. Whitby's principle respecting the determination of the will, the following inferences are directly deducible. First, man is an ignorant, but not a morally depraved being; for moral depravity consists solely in the undue tendency of disapproved appetites and passions to fix the will in opposition to the dictates of the understanding or conscience. Hence, second, man can never commit sin; for, as the Doctor himself allows, sin is just the acting against the strongest motive, or the doing of what we *know* to be wrong and the forbearing to do what we *know* to be right. And, third, in order to regenerate men, the influence of the Spirit of God is necessary only to furnish a clear and intelligible revelation, but not to exert any influence on the mind itself.

All these conclusions Dr. Whitby very properly disowns, though he thereby virtually overthrows his own favourite principle. He admits that even the regenerate frequently act against the strongest motives, and that all in many things offend. He decidedly and very satisfactorily establishes the reality of divine agency on the

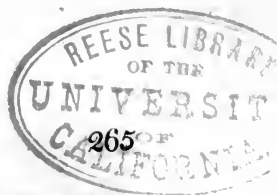
mind, and teaches, that the Holy Spirit "cannot enable us to mortify the deeds of the flesh without some vital energy, some renewing operations, or powerful assistances to subdue those motions of the flesh which lust against the Spirit."* All this is true and scriptural, but it is plain, that if "something approved by the understanding" invariably fixes the will, the first truth is impossible, and the second is unnecessary. It must be held a first principle in Christian philosophy, that "light has come into the world," however we may choose to explain the fact, "that men love darkness rather than light." A revelation which cannot be apprehended and understood is a contradiction, and besides destroys all ground of moral obligation as directly as were men lying under the most hopeless physical necessity. Unless the gospel come and speak to men in plain and intelligible words, they have no sin in rejecting it. The things of the Spirit, indeed, that is, the operations of the Spirit on the heart of man, and all the moral effects consequent upon his regenerating agency, cannot be understood, unless they are actually produced by the Spirit in the mind of the individual. But these are not strictly the gospel; and the facts of Christ and the plain offers made to men in consequence of his death and resur-

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* Discourse of Sufficient Grace, Chap. I.

rection, are things so intelligible that he who runs may read. This being the case, if man can act always upon the dictates of his understanding, it is useless to talk of the agency and influence of the Holy Spirit in his regeneration; for all the effects which He is said to produce can be accounted for on natural and otherwise confessedly Scriptural principles.

The mistake of Dr. Whitby and of those Calvinistic clergymen who are now so zealously propagating, in somewhat a different shape, the most pernicious of his errors, is in their most unphilosophical attempt to explain, not merely the effects, but the mode of the Spirit's operations. Our blessed Redeemer long ago laid down the true and philosophical method of inquiry and the true limits of human knowledge in this sort of causation, which Dr. Brown, in his Essay on Cause and Effect, has since so strikingly illustrated. As we know the motion of the air by its effects, so we can know the operations of the Holy Spirit, not by what *He* does to us, but what *we* are enabled to do in consequence of his agency upon us. All that can be known by us are *our own* perceptions and feelings, which are matters of consciousness; we are not conscious of the *immediate* acts of the Spirit. These operations are not the legitimate objects of the inquiries of the philosopher, and assuredly they are no warrantable subject for the minister of the



gospel. If the divine, however, desirous to practise a little the quackery of men of his profession, and to appear profound in the eyes of the ill-informed, chooses to talk of them, he must certainly style them *physical*; for all the moral acts are our own, and they are the antecedents. The term, *physical*, indeed, has a tendency to suggest something too gross and material, and, therefore, the term *spiritual* may, with more propriety, be employed; but it is always to be recollected, that they are something antecedent both to the intellectual and moral states of mind which are the fruits of the divine influence.

To know then the nature and extent of the divine agency, our sole inquiry is, what is it which the gospel requires us to be able to perform, and what is it which the Christian actually performs, in consequence of the agency of the Spirit of God. We are required to do two things: as intellectual beings, to know and believe the gospel; as moral agents, to regulate our will and affections according to its principles, and consequently to act upon them. In the former character, we must have faith; in the latter, we must have faith that *worketh* on the principles commanded in the gospel; and that is *the faith* of the Christian.

Now, in order to enable us to perform the first of these requirements, let it be admitted, that the Holy Spirit, after having revealed to us the

word, enables us, by his direct agency, to form larger, more accurate, and vigorous conceptions of it. This is certainly true; but then, let it be recollected, that there is nothing peculiar here, and that it is just what one man is confessedly daily in the habit of doing to another, in a greater or less degree; and I am disposed to believe, that it is not in mere intellect that man is deficient. Frequently has the cold, the formal, the unsanctified theologian, clear and large conceptions of the whole system of Christianity, fully appreciates the amount of evidence by which its truth is demonstrated, contemplates with pleasure the beautiful consistency of all its parts, and elevated on the soaring wing of a vigorous imagination, grasps the loftiest and most sublime conceptions of the majesty, the justice, the mercy of the godhead, displayed in the economy of salvation; while the humble, depending, and loving believer labours under much misconception and great obscurity, respecting even the elements of his faith. And every Christian must have experienced that the humility and tenderness of his heart, and submission of his will do not always bear proportion to the activity of his intellect and the vigour of his conceptions.

But to proceed, what is it which we need to enable us to regulate our will and affections on the principles of the gospel; or, in other words,

to enable our faith to work on those principles? To answer this question, we have just to recollect what it is on which the existence and strength of affections, desires, and volitions depend. If it be upon perceptions alone, nothing more is necessary than right knowledge. Let a man know his duty, and he will not fail to perform it, but will change his own heart, love God supremely, and discharge all commanded duty as a matter of course; for he cannot indeed, on Dr. Whitby's principle, do otherwise. But if the existence and strength of feeling depend upon the strength of the susceptibilities, or upon the bias, disposition, or tendency of the heart, as well as upon the perception of the object; then it is obvious what is required to regenerate a moral being. His depraved heart must be directly renewed as well as his judgment enlightened. There are two causes of the evil; and it were useless to remove one, if the other, and confessedly by far the more powerful, be allowed still to operate. Dr. Whitby strenuously and justly argues, that it is reasonable to believe that the operations of the Spirit will be suitable to the reason and faculties of man, the understanding and the will. Grant it fully; and how is it likely that divine wisdom should proceed to renovate a moral agent? Would it be merely by raising ideas in his brain as the Doctor affirms? No, assuredly. This

would meet but a small part of the evil. The disease of man is not so much the want of knowledge as the unwillingness to act upon it; and how can this so well be removed, as by removing the moral tendency itself. To maintain the sufficiency of mere knowledge is to talk like a man unacquainted with human nature. If the Spirit of God really act with the wisdom of God, and accommodate his operations to the nature of the subject, and the end to be accomplished, it cannot be doubted, how He will proceed in the renovation of fallen man. To enlighten the judgment will be one thing, but to renovate, by a direct act of power, the corrupted heart, will be a greater. This the Christian must daily experience. He is not for ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth; but he finds he daily requires strength from on high. He is not constantly seeking for truth and its evidence; but he has to pray without ceasing for strength to enable him to act upon truths which he already knows. Well did the Apostles know the inefficiency of mere knowledge. Happy, says one, is he who offendeth not in that which he approveth. That which I do I allow not, says another; and the reason is, I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. To such a being, mere knowledge could never effect his

moral renovation ; and did not the Holy Spirit act according to the principles of our nature, and to renovate the heart, remove both the causes of its depravity, never had the Apostle, with the gratitude of a faith which worketh by love, thanked God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The doctrine then that knowledge is all that is required in order to renovate the human heart is utterly untenable, both upon the principles of the human constitution, the testimony of the sacred Scriptures, and the evidence of Christian experience. To confute the idea that intellectual belief is all that is necessary to constitute the Christian, we have just to point to the fact, that man is a moral being, whose will therefore determines his character, and that his volitions depend as much upon the susceptibilities and bias of his heart as upon the nature of his perceptions. If we look to the sacred Scriptures, they every where describe man as doing what they well know to be wrong, and as hating the light, not because they see it not, but because their deeds, and hence their wills from which their actions proceed, are evil. And if Christian experience is appealed to, how decidedly does it prove the uselessness of all knowledge to convert the heart and govern the will of a corrupted moral being ? Even the man who may know all mysteries and knowledge, whose heart has been regenerated by the Spirit of God, and who has advanced far to-

wards perfection, is still groaning under a body of sin, and by the remaining corruption of his heart, is compelled to confess, that the good which we would he does not, but that the evil which he would not that he does. Let us not then seek to accommodate facts to hypotheses, and talk of the efficacy of truth and evidence to effect the moral renovation of man, till we practically deny the agency of the Holy Spirit. Let us rather imitate the sacred writers, who fearlessly display the extent of the disease and the hopeless degeneracy of the human heart; for they know that they proclaim a remedy more than sufficient for all its wants. No perception of evidence, they maintain, and no knowledge of truth, however well adapted to its end and how much soever it may effect, can renew the degenerate heart and rescue the man from bondage; but they proclaim the Spirit of God—who at first created the thinking mind and the feeling soul, as the only source of all sanctification and freedom to his fallen creature. Why then conceal the evil, when so mighty a deliverer is prepared? The Creator has become the Redeemer: is *He* not able to renovate the corrupted heart, as well as to enlighten the darkened mind?*

* Note H.

APPENDIX.

Note A.

VOLITION.—Dr. Brown's account of volition is so just and so satisfactory, that it may gratify the reader to see it more at large. "The term will, in its application to a process which is partly mental and partly organic, is not denied to be a convenient term for expressing those desires which have instant termination in a muscular motion, which is their object, to distinguish them from desires which relate to objects not directly and immediately attainable, and therefore not accompanied with the belief of direct and immediate attainment; but still it must not be forgotten, that the mental part of the sequence, the momentary feeling which exists in our consciousness alone, and ceases almost as soon as it rises, is a desire that differs not from other desires more than those others mutually differ.*** We are hence often said inaccurately to will, as if, in the process, there were two feelings of the mind, a desire and a volition, so essentially different in their nature, that the will was the choice of what was not desirable. Thus if any one be compelled to support a weight on his outstretched arm, under a fear of a more painful punishment if he should draw it back, and experience, as in that situation he must soon experience, a degree of fatigue which is almost insupportable; if he still continue to keep his arm extended, he will be said, in the common language of philosophers, to will the very pain which he cannot be suppos-

ed to desire. But the direct object of his desire is not the motion of his arm ; it is simply relief from pain : and the direct object of his continued will is not the continuance of pain ; it is simply the extension of his arm. He knows indeed that relief from pain will be immediately procured by drawing back his arm ; but he knows also that a severer punishment will follow that motion ; and, therefore, preferring the less pain to the greater, he directly desires or wills the continued extension of his arm, as what alone can preserve him from greater suffering. If the direct object of his desire were not relief from pain, but the actual muscular motion which would bring down his weary arm, there can be no doubt that the motion of his arm would immediately ensue.

“ ‘With regard to our actions,’ says Dr. Reid, ‘ we may desire what we do not will, and will what we do not desire, nay, what we have a great aversion to. A man athirst has a strong desire to drink, but for some particular reason, he determines not to gratify his desire. A judge, from a regard to justice and the duty of his office, dooms a criminal to die, while from his humanity or particular affection, he desires the criminal to live. A man for health may take a nauseous draught, for which he has no desire but a great aversion. Desire, therefore, even when its object is some action of our own, is only an incitement to will, but it is not volition. The determination of the mind may be not to do what we desire to do.’

“ In all these instances adduced by Dr. Reid, his mistake consists in neglecting or forgetting that part of the process, in which there is a real opposition of desires, and supposing an opposition in another part of the process in which there is really none ; for in no one of the instances, is there the smallest opposition, in that particular desire on which the action immediately depends, and which must, therefore, according to his own system, be denominated by him the will. The determination of the mind never is, and never can be to do what, in the particular circumstances of the moment, we do not desire to do. When we take a nauseous

draught, there is a dislike indeed of the sensation which follows the motion, but there is no dislike of the motion itself, which alone depends upon our will, and which is desired by us, not from any love of the disagreeable sensation which follows it—for a love of what is disagreeable would be an absurd contradiction of terms—but from our greater dislike of that continuance of bad health, which we suppose to be the probable consequence of omitting the motion. The desire of moving the hand and the muscles of deglutition ; or to use a word which Dr. Reid would have preferred, the will to move them, is a state of mind as different and as distinguishable from the dislike of bad health as from the dislike of the draught. It is a new feeling to which the wide view of many feelings has given birth—a desire, not of pleasure in the draught, but of a less evil in one of two unavoidable evils.

“ In like manner a judge who condemns a criminal to death, when, if he yielded to his humanity alone, he would spare him, does not will a single action which he is not desirous of performing, whatever opposition there may have been in those primary desires, of which his secondary desires or will is not a part but only the consequence. He has a desire of saving from death an unfortunate individual, but he has a desire of the public good, and of acting in a manner worthy of his high station. Both these desires exist previously to those that are termed his volitions, by which alone in the muscular motion that follows them, he dooms the criminal to death ; the final will to utter the awful words of punishment, arising only from the belief of greater good upon the whole, in the same manner as the desire of fame, arising from the contemplation of fame, or any other desire from the contemplation of its object.”—*Cause and Effect*, p. 56—58.

President Edwards was long ago of the same opinion respecting the identity of desire with volition. “ God,” says he, “ has endued the soul with two faculties: one is that by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it discerns, and views, and judges of things ; which is

called the understanding. The other faculty is that by which the soul does not merely perceive and view things, but is some way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers ; either is inclined *to them*, or is disinclined and averse *from them* : or is the faculty by which the soul does not behold things, as an indifferent unaffected spectator, but either as liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names : it is sometimes called the *inclination* : and, as it has respect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the *will* : and the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the *heart*.

“ The *will*, and the *affections* of the soul, are not two faculties ; the affections are not essentially distinct from the will, nor do they differ from the mere actings of the will and inclination of the soul, but only in the liveliness and sensibleness of exercise.

“ It must be confessed, that language is here somewhat imperfect, and the meaning of words in a considerable measure loose and unfixed, and not precisely limited by custom, which governs the use of language. In some sense, the affection of the soul differs nothing at all from the will and inclination, and the will never is in any exercise any further than it is *affected* ; it is not moved out of a state of perfect indifference, any otherwise than as it is *affected* one way or other, and acts nothing any further. But yet there are many actings of the will and inclination, that are not so commonly called *affections* : in every thing we do, wherein we act voluntarily, there is an exercise of the will and inclination, it is our inclination that governs us in our actions : but all the actings of the inclination and will, in all our common actions of life, are not ordinarily called affections. Yet, what are commonly called affections are not essentially different from them, but only in the degree and manner of exercise. In every act of the will whatsoever, the soul either likes or dislikes, is either inclined or disinclined to what is in view : these are not essentially different from those affections of *love* and *hatred* : that liking

or inclination of the soul to a thing, if it be in a high degree, and be vigorous and lively, is the very same thing with the affection of *love*: and that disliking and disinclining, if in a great degree, is the very same with *hatred*. In every act of the will *for*, or *towards* something not present, the soul is in some degree inclined to that thing; and that inclination, if in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of *desire*. And in every degree of the act of the will wherein the soul approves of something present, there is a degree of pleasedness; and that pleasedness, if it be in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of *joy* or *delight*. And if the will disapproves of what is present, the soul is in some degree displeased, and if that displeasedness be great, it is the very same with the affection of *grief* or *sorrow*."—*Treatise on the Affections*, p. 4, 5.

Note B.

ASSOCIATION.—Dr. Brown was the first philosophical writer who gave any thing like a true account of the principle of association. He divides his laws of suggestion into *primary* and *secondary*, under the former comprehending the relations among the objects perceived; under the latter, the accidental circumstances in the feelings and states of the mind itself which modify the associations. The *primary* laws of association he attempts to reduce to one general principle, that of prior co-existence or immediate proximity. A late writer, the Rev. Mr. Ballantyne, in a work entitled an *Examination of the Human Mind*, has further improved on the principle of Dr. Brown, and most satisfactorily proved that the great principle of association is the mere fact of *precedence*, that is, as he states it, "an idea acquires power to suggest another by immediately preceding it," or in other words, the mind thinks on things in the same order in which it first perceived them. This is a very simple principle, and is well known to all mankind; and has certainly been obscured, like many other very simple subjects, by the attempts of philosophers to ex-

plain it. The man perceives nature as she really is, magnificent in her simplicity : when the philosopher sits down to explain what all men distinctly know, he obscures his subject in order to be profound. If we have a mind capable of perceiving things and of retaining the knowledge of them ; why should it not remember them in the same order in which it perceived them ? If we see the objects, A, B, C, in a certain order, in thinking of the same objects, how should we think of them otherwise than as placed one before the other in the given order. As the object of perception is to obtain a knowledge of things as they really are, in like manner the object of conception and memory is just to retain the knowledge of what has been actually perceived. Were our mental power greater, we should be capable of forming conceptions of more complex objects, and might possibly contemplate all our knowledge at at once, as a complex object of thought, and then association would be unnecessary ; but since our limited faculties render this impossible, it is plain that the natural method is to think of things in the order in which, to our perceptions, they really exist. There is then no mystery in the general principle of association, as consisting in mere precedence. The word memory, as vulgarly understood, accurately and fully states the whole doctrine of intellectual association. We cannot remember or think of all things at once ; we therefore think of objects in the order in which they were at first perceived, till we have had before our mind the whole of any class of objects which it is necessary to contemplate.

But though precedence is the only law of association which regards objects as perceived by us, it by no means accounts for the order in which numbers of thoughts are found to occur. In committing to memory the alphabet, lists of words, &c. which excite no sensible emotion, it is true that it is the only circumstance which guides our train of ideas, or, in other words, the mind passes along the list in the order in which the objects there occur ; but when emotion is excited, this law of precedence is found to exert comparatively little influence. Dr. Brown has accordingly given us a number of circumstances, which he styles *secondary* laws of suggestion ; by which

he accounts for many of the trains of ideas which do not follow the primary laws which he had formerly given. Mr. Ballantyne attempts to reduce these to his law of precedence; but, it must be confessed, that he has not been successful. Some of Dr. Brown's secondary laws, indeed, may be reduced to Mr. Ballantyne's principle, and some of them are to be reduced to other principles; but there are at least three or four of them which completely support the distinction which Dr. Brown intended to establish. Mr. Ballantyne, in his summary attempt to reduce them to his own law, virtually admits this by saying, that the law of precedence, "like all others, necessarily leads to different results, according to the difference of circumstances in which it operates, whether these be constitutional differences or accidental ones." This is true; but then it is just those *circumstances* which Dr. Brown wishes to ascertain, which, he justly observes, exert so extensive an influence in modifying and directing the general principle of association. Besides, the whole of Mr. Ballantyne's voluntary principle, which he describes as *the power of detaining ideas*, &c. is just an illustration of Dr. Brown's secondary laws. The secondary laws of Dr. Brown are plainly designed, though that acute philosopher passed rather lightly over the subject, to illustrate the influence which the volitions, the desires, and emotions exercise in directing the thinking principle. His first, sixth, seventh, and eighth, are decidedly of this character, and plainly evince that the great fact he intended to illustrate, is the influence which our sentient nature exercises over the operations of the intellectual.

But not to pursue this controversy, every one who regards his own consciousness is aware, that he does not always think on objects in the same order of precedence in which he perceived them; but that those which are connected with desire and feeling frequently arrest the attention, and hence guide the train of thought. All this, indeed, Mr. Ballantyne has well illustrated, in reducing attention and abstraction to his voluntary principle. Taking up, therefore, Dr. Brown's

secondary laws of suggestion as intended to express the influence which the volitions, desires, and feelings generally exercise over our intellectual activity, we have only to inquire what are the laws of this sentient association. It is plain, every sensation, emotion and feeling of our nature which is known by us to be related to any idea, is a law of association,—that is, a circumstance which guides the thinking mind in passing from one thought to another. Any enumeration therefore of the secondary laws of suggestion must be simply a list of the feelings of our sentient nature; and in different individuals they will vary, of course, according to the number of feelings which their circumstances and mental cultivation may have excited and called into vigorous action.

Hence the simplicity and efficiency of the associating principle. The pure intellect thinks of things as they really are, and in the order in which they have been perceived; the sentient principle leads us to think of them according as they are more important and interesting to us. By the former, we retain the knowledge of facts; by the latter, these facts, in proportion as they are more or less important, are made the objects of contemplation. This association is so well adapted to our present state, that, *a priori*, one could have almost inferred that in some such way the mind would conduct its operations. The intelligent being requires to know truth, and therefore he remembers things as they are; the voluntary being requires to act for his own interest, and therefore the tendency of sentient association is to induce him to think on those objects in which he has most interest.

Besides these two principles of association, there is another part of our nature which regards both the mental operations and the feelings, as well the mechanical powers. This fact is styled *habit*. Dr. Brown, in his too great love of simplicity, endeavoured to reduce this principle to suggestion; and it is no doubt true, that it belongs to suggestion as well as to all the other faculties. He was led perhaps to attempt

this reduction from the mistake of Dr. Reid and other philosophers, who seemed disposed to consider it a separate faculty, which it assuredly is not. It is nothing but a fact which regards all our powers, the corporal as well as mental. The muscles of the workman become strong by toil, as well as the thinking powers of the philosopher by frequent thought. Had Dr. Brown more carefully considered his own just description of habit, he could not have considered it capable of the reduction which he attempted. "The nature of habit may be considered in two lights; as it produces a greater tendency to certain actions, and as it occasions greater facility and excellence in those particular actions."* It is plain, that such a principle cannot be reduced to suggestion, nor any other faculty whatever, but must be considered a law of our nature which regards all our powers and susceptibilities. Suggestion is just the fact that we think on one thing after another; but that we more easily run over a train of ideas which we have frequently thought upon, or have those feelings more keenly which we have often indulged, or feel those members of the body stronger which we often employ, cannot, it is plain, be reduced to this principle. Habit is nothing but a general law of our constitution, which less or more influences all our faculties. Let us form one conception after another repeatedly, and we will find greater ease in running from thought to thought. Let us indulge any feeling, and its action will gradually become more intense.

This fact then, considered as modifying the operations of intellect and the influence of feeling, will render the subject of association easy, and perfectly adequate to account for all the phenomena. Let any man attend to his own consciousness, and he will discover, that, when feeling is not excited, and volition not active in directing his train of thought, but the thinking principle is allowed to act at pleasure, he will think on objects just as he perceived them, or has been

accustomed to conceive them. Very few instances however occur in which the mind is left perfectly free to follow the law of its own essential activity. In the most sluggish moment of castle-building, the desires and tendencies of the heart, almost unconsciously insinuate themselves; and the man is always found to think on what he loves, or on objects which are most interesting to his feelings. But in every case it will be found, either that the man is following the law of intellect, and thinking of objects in the order in which they have been perceived, or that his affections and will are selecting their favourite objects and guiding the thinking mind to the ideas by which they obtain most gratification.

The practical conclusions to be derived from the true principle of association are numerous and important. Dr. Brown and Mr. Ballantyne are justly entitled to the praise of having done more to explain the manner of its action than any writers with whom I am acquainted. Now that we have been put upon the true principle, much is to be done in the legitimate application, and it is to be fondly hoped that some truly inductive philosopher may take it up, and apply it to the arts of education, study, &c. There is a rich and extensive field still unexplored, which would abundantly reward his labours. The fact that the pure thinking principle forms its conceptions of things exactly in the order in which it perceives them, and that every feeling acts as an associating principle to direct the train of thought, would enable him to explain a multitude of phenomena in a manner that a certain sect of modern materialists and fatalists might attempt in vain. The feelings of our sentient nature must be allowed to depend upon the body, since they are common to the brutes; and the truth that the immaterial and immortal spirit has now its operations modified by its connection with the sentient nature, would explain a multitude of somewhat unaccountable facts, without driving us to materialism and fatalism, with their invariable attendants, scepticism and moral degradation. The abettors of such systems first endeavour

to prove an immortal being a brute, and then sedulously try to make him so, in order to bear out their conclusion.

Note E. (page 132.)

Determination of the Will.—Mr. Locke's views of the mode in which the will is determined are so admirably just, and illustrate so clearly both the nature of volition and the source of moral necessity, that I cannot forbear presenting them to the reader. By *uneasiness* he plainly means what Dr. Brown and President Edwards have called desire, which always arises from uneasiness.

“ § 31. To return then to the inquiry, *What is it that determines the will in regard to our actions?* And that upon second thoughts I am apt to imagine is not, as is generally supposed, the greater good in view ; but some (and for the most part the most pressing) *uneasiness* a man is at present under. This is that which successively determines the *will*, and sets us upon those actions we perform. This *uneasiness* we may call, as it is, *desire*, which is an *uneasiness* of the mind for want of some absent good. All pain of the body, of what sort soever, and disquiet of the mind, is *uneasiness* : And with this is always joined desire, equal to the pain or *uneasiness* felt ; and is scarce distinguishable from it. For *desire* being nothing but an *uneasiness* in the want of an absent good, in reference to any pain felt, ease is that absent good ; and until that ease be attained we may call it *desire*, nobody feeling pain, that he wishes not to be eased of, with a desire equal to that pain, and inseparable from it. Besides this desire of ease from pain, there is another of absent positive good, and here also the desire and *uneasiness* is equal. As much as we desire any absent good, so much are we in pain for it. But here all absent good does not, according to the greatness it has, or is acknowledged to have, cause pain equal to that greatness ; as all pain causes desire equal to itself : Because the absence of good is not always a pain, as the pre-

sence of pain is. And therefore absent good may be looked on, and considered without *desire*. But so much as there is any where of *desire*, so much there is of *uneasiness*.

“ § 32. That *desire* is a state of *uneasiness*, every one who reflects on himself will quickly find. Who is there, that has not felt in *desire*, what the wise man says of hope, (which is not much different from it) that it being *deferred makes the heart sick* ? And that still proportionable to the greatness of the *desire*, which sometimes raises the *uneasiness* to that pitch, that it makes people cry out, *give me children, give me the thing desired, or I die* ? Life itself, and all its enjoyments, is a burden which cannot be borne under the lasting and unremoved pressure of such an *uneasiness*.

“ § 33. Good and evil, present and absent, 'tis true, work upon the mind ; but that which immediately determines the *will*, from time to time, to every voluntary action, is the *uneasiness* of *desire*, fixed on some absent good, either negative, as indolency to one in pain ; or positive, as enjoyment of pleasure. That it is this *uneasiness*, that determines the *will* to the successive voluntary actions, whereof the greatest part of our lives is made up, and by which we are conducted through different courses to different ends, I shall endeavour to show both from experience, and the reason of the thing.

“ § 34. When a man is perfectly content with the state he is in, which is when he is perfectly without any *uneasiness*, what industry, what action, what *will* is there left, but to continue in it ? Of this every man's observation will satisfy him. And thus we see our all-wise Maker, suitable to our constitution and frame, and knowing what it is that determines the *will*, has put into man the *uneasiness* of hunger and thirst, and other natural desires, that return at their seasons, to move and determine their *wills*, for the preservation of themselves, and the continuation of their species. For I think we may conclude, that, if the bare contemplation of these good ends, to which we are carried by these several *uneasinesses*, had been sufficient to determine the *will*, and set us on work, we should have had none of these natu-

ral pains, and perhaps in this world little or no pain at all. *It is better to marry than to burn*, says St. Paul; where we may see, what it is that chiefly drives men into the enjoyments of a conjugal life. A little burning felt pushes us more powerfully, than greater pleasures in prospect draw or allure.

“ § 35. It seems so established and settled a maxim by the general consent of all mankind, that good, the greater good, determines the will, that I do not at all wonder, that when I first published my thoughts on this subject, I took it for granted; and I imagine, that by a great many I shall be thought more excusable, for having then done so, than that now I have ventured to recede from so received an opinion. But yet, upon a stricter inquiry, I am forced to conclude, that *good*, the *greater good*, though apprehended and acknowledged to be so, does not determine the *will*, until our desire, raised proportionably to it, makes us *uneasy* in the want of it. Convince a man never so much, that plenty has its advantages over poverty; make him see and own, that the handsome conveniences of life are better than nasty penury; yet as long as he is content with the latter, and finds no uneasiness in it, he moves not; his will is never determined to any action that shall bring him out of it. Let a man be ever so well persuaded of the advantages of virtue, that it is as necessary to a man, who has any great aims in this world, or hopes in the next, as food to life: Yet till he *hungers and thirsts after righteousness*; 'till he feels an *uneasiness* in the want of it, his *will* will not be determined to any action in pursuit of this confessed greater good; but any other *uneasiness* he feels in himself, shall take place, and carry his *will* to other actions. On the other side, let a drunkard see that his health decays, his estate wastes; discredit and diseases, and the want of all things, even of his beloved drink, attends him in the course he follows: yet the returns of *uneasiness* to miss his companions, the habitual thirst after his cups, at the usual time, drives him to the tavern, though he has in his view the loss of health and plenty, and perhaps of

the joys of another life: the least of which is no inconsiderable good, but such as he confesses, is far greater than the tickling of his palate with a glass of wine, or the idle chat of a soaking club. 'Tis not for want of viewing the greater good ; for he sees, and acknowledges it, and in the intervals of his drinking hours, will take resolutions to pursue the greater good ; but when the *uneasiness* to miss his accustomed delight returns, the greater acknowledged good loses its hold, and the present *uneasiness* determines the *will* to the accustomed action ; which thereby gets stronger footing to prevail against the next occasion, though he, at the same time, makes secret promises to himself, that he will do so no more ; this is the last time he will act against the attainment of those greater goods. And thus he is, from time to time, in the state of that unhappy complainer, *video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor* ; which sentence, allowed for true, and made good by constant experience, may this, and possibly no other way, be easily made intelligible.

§ 36. If we inquire into the reason of what experience makes so evident in fact, and examine why 'tis *uneasiness* alone operates on the *will*, and determines it in its choice, we shall find, that we being capable but of one determination of the *will* to one action at once, the present *uneasiness* that we are under, does naturally determine the will, in order to that happiness which we all aim at in all our actions ; for as much as whilst we were under any *uneasiness*, we cannot apprehend ourselves happy, or in the way to it. Pain and *uneasiness* being, by every one, concluded, and felt, to be inconsistent with happiness ; spoiling the relish, even of those good things which we have : a little pain serving to marr all the pleasure we rejoiced in. And therefore, that which of course determines the choice of our *will* to the next action, will always be the removing of pain, as long as we have any left, as the first and necessary step towards happiness.

§ 37. Another reason why 'tis *uneasiness* alone determines the will, may be this. Because that alone is present, and

'tis against the nature of things, that what is absent should operate where it is not. It may be said, that absent good may by contemplation be brought home to the mind, and made present. The *idea* of it, indeed, may be in the mind and viewed as present there ; but nothing will be in the mind as a present good, able to counterbalance the removal of any *uneasiness* which we are under, till it raises our desire, and the *uneasiness* of that has the prevalency in determining the *will*. Till then the *idea* in the mind of whatever good, is there only like other *ideas*, the object of bare unactive speculation ; but operates not on the will, nor sets us on work : the reason whereof I shall shew by and bye. How many are to be found, that have had lively representations set before their minds of the unspeakable joys of heaven, which they acknowledge both possible and probable too, who yet would be content to take up with their happiness here ? And so the prevailing *uneasiness* of their desires, let loose after the enjoyments of this life, take their turns in the determining their *wills*, and all that while they take not one step, are not one jot moved, towards the good things of another life, considered as ever so great.

“ § 38. Were the *will* determined by the views of good, as it appears in contemplation greater or less to the understanding, which is the state of all absent good, and that which in the received opinion, the *will* is supposed to move to, and to be moved by, I do not see how it could ever get loose from the infinite eternal joys of heaven, once proposed and considered as possible. For all absent good, by which alone, barely proposed, and coming in view, the *will* is thought to be determined, and so to set us on action, being only possible, but not infallibly certain, it is unavoidable, that the infinitely greater possible good should regularly and constantly determine the *will* in all the successive actions it directs ; and then we should keep constantly and steadily in our course towards heaven, without ever standing still, or directing our actions to any other end : The eternal condition of a future state infinitely out-weighing the expectation of riches,

or honour, or any other worldly pleasure, which we can propose to ourselves, though we should grant these the more probable to be attained : For nothing future is yet in possession, and so the expectation even of these may deceive us. If it were so, that the greater good in view determines the *will*, so great a good once proposed could not but seize the *will*, and hold it fast to the pursuit of this infinitely greatest good, without ever letting it go again : For the *will* having a power over, and directing the thoughts, as well as other actions, would, if it were so, hold the contemplation of the mind fixed to that good.

“This would be the state of the mind, and regular tendency of the *will* in all its determinations, were it determined by that which is considered, and in view the greater good ; but that it is not so, is visible in experience. The infinitely greatest confessed good being often neglected, to satisfy the successive *uneasiness* of our desires pursuing trifles. But though the greatest allowed, even everlasting unspeakable good, which has sometimes moved, and affected the mind, does not steadfastly hold the *will*, yet we see any very great and prevailing *uneasiness*, having once laid hold on the *will*, lets it not go ; by which we may be convinced, what it is that determines the *will*. Thus any vehement pain of the body ; the ungovernable passion of a man violently in love ; or the impatient desire of revenge, keeps the *will* steady and intent ; and the *will* thus determined, never lets the understanding lay by the object, but all the thoughts of the mind, and powers of the body are uninterruptedly employed that way, by the determinations of the *will*, influenced by that topping *uneasiness*, as long as it lasts ; whereby it seems to me evident, that the *will*, or power of setting us upon one action in preference to all other, is determined in us by *uneasiness* ; And whether this be not so, I desire every one to observe in himself.

“ § 40. But we being in this world beset with sundry *uneasinesses*, distracted with different *desires*, the next inquiry naturally will be, which of them has the precedency in deter-

mining the *will* to the next action? And to that the answer is, that ordinarily, which is the most pressing of those that are judged capable of being then removed. For the *will* being the power of directing our operative faculties to some action, for some end, cannot at any time be moved towards what is judged at that time unattainable: That would be to suppose an intelligent being designedly to act for an end, only to lose its labour; for so it is to act for what is judged not attainable; and therefore very great *uneasinesses* move not the *will*, when they are judged not capable of a cure: They, in that case, put us not upon endeavours. But these set apart, the most important and urgent *uneasiness* we at that time feel, is that which ordinarily determines the *will* successively, in that train of voluntary actions, which make up our lives. The greatest present *uneasiness* is the spur to action that is constantly felt; and for the most part determines the *will* in its choice of the next action. For this we must carry along with us, that the proper and only object of the *will* is some action of ours, and nothing else. For we producing nothing, by our *willing* it, but some action in our power, it is there the *will* terminates, and reaches no farther.—*Human Understanding, Book II. Chap. 21.*

Note E. (Page 173.)

FAITH.—Against the view of faith which has been given in the note, it may be still urged that to conceive man to co-operate, to such an extent, in the application of redemption, tends to abridge our estimation of the grace of God, displayed in the Christian economy. This objection may arise from partial views of the subject, but as it is naturally that of a soul humbled by a sense of its own unworthiness and weakness, and jealous for the glory of God, to whom it owes in a twofold sense its all, it deserves the most candid and explicit answer. Let us just glance at the extent of the grace of God in the economy of redemption. When man by his own guilty

act had cast himself from his primitive state of dignity and glory, and exposed himself and all his posterity to hopeless ruin, God interposed and provided a Redeemer in the person of his only begotten Son. This surely was an act purely of sovereign grace. Now that Christ has died for our sins and risen again for our justification, we deserve no more than thousands of others who are sitting in the region of the shadow of death, to be favoured with the knowledge of the gospel; and it did not depend on us whether or not we should have been favoured with it, as we now so liberally are. That we hear the gospel therefore is another instance of the sovereign grace of God. Here, as rational and moral agents, we are required to begin to co-operate; but though we should by study and depth of thought understand all the mysteries of the gospel as well as an Apostle, be thoroughly convinced of their truth, by the examination of evidence, meditate night and day upon them, and moved by the faith which worketh by fear, pray without ceasing; never could we trust on Christ for pardon of sins and sanctification of heart, and never could we truly love Him and be in a state of salvation,—until by another act of unmerited grace we obtain the gift of the Holy Ghost to create us a new and restore a right spirit within us. And it is not here that the grace of God terminates. After, by the power of the Holy Ghost, a man has been rendered a true believer, he cannot continue so, unless supported by the same Spirit, who renewed his heart and enabled him at first to believe. He must be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; and this is no less of grace, for the idea of sinful beings having any merit such as to give them a right to the gifts of God, is an utter contradiction. Thus sovereign grace provided a Saviour,—sovereign grace sends us the knowledge of Him,—unmerited and sovereign grace enables us to believe upon Him with the only saving faith, the faith which worketh by love,—and still unmerited, sovereign, and long-suffering grace supports us through all the difficulties, and aggravated backslidings of life, till it introduce us to the kingdom prepared

for us before the foundation of the world. In this amazing work of sovereign mercy, the co-operation of man, so far from obscuring the lustre of the grace of God, renders the whole in the highest degree beautiful, and consistent at once with the wisdom, the veracity, the justice, and the faithfulness of God, and the moral nature and responsibility of man. Not to speak at present of its consistency with the attributes of God, if man could not understand the great truths of the gospel, when presented to him, or not appreciate their evidence, there could be no ground, as we formerly showed, for moral obligation. And if man, on hearing and believing the truth of the gospel, cannot, as he is, pray for the gift of the Holy Ghost, but must, in some mysterious and unaccountable way, be renovated and made holy before he come to Christ to ask the spirit of regeneration and sanctification, the offer of the gospel is no longer free and of sovereign grace, but loaded with the most impossible of all conditions. The freeness and sovereign grace of the gospel consists in this, that the halt and the maimed, the blind, the diseased, and the unclean are invited just as they are, convinced as rational beings that there is but one way of salvation and assentient beings desiring deliverance from misery, to come to Christ to obtain freely from his hand pardon of sins, sanctification of soul, and deliverance from all their miseries. This is truly sovereign grace. The Almighty, in perfect consistence with all his attributes, accommodating himself to the fallen state of his moral creatures, sunk by their sin to a degree of degradation but one step superior to that of the brutes, stoops to the condition of man to raise the sinful, the undeserving, and the wretched to holiness, honour and glory. Deny man's ability to understand the great facts of the gospel, when fairly presented to him, and to seek those blessings which are held forth, and let the most able disputant, if he can, rebut the unhallowed charges of the infidel, not against confessedly mysterious truths, but against the plainest doctrines of Christianity.

And, indeed, to say that a man cannot do very much, without any regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, is in

direct opposition to the plainest testimony of Scripture. Did not Saul the Pharisee do much? did not the young ruler? did not the five foolish virgins, who, with the full assurance of faith, were waiting for the coming of the bridegroom, and multitudes of others—all do much without the regenerating power of grace? To say then that men can do nothing in the receiving of the gospel, besides denying the freeness and the sovereignty of the grace of God, by clogging it with impossible conditions, lays a most dangerous snare for souls. Let a man who has been taught that he can do nothing, feel that he actually has the most orthodox belief of all the doctrines of the gospel, and moreover, is a very decent moral Christian, as it is termed, and has he not reason to believe, not only that he is a regenerated man, but is to a high degree sanctified? There is some awful delusion of this sort, lurking under, what, in the elation of spiritual pride, we style our *Calvinistic orthodoxy*. So true it is, as a sound Calvinist justly observes, that corrupted man mars and defiles every thing he touches. The very grace of God, when he attempts, in the plenitude of his wisdom not in the humility of his soul, to magnify it, is converted into a snare to deceive and ruin souls.

There is another objection to the view of faith which I am attempting to illustrate, which deserves a moment's attention. If a man, it is said, really believes that Christ is able and willing to save him, and is so desirous of salvation as to be enabled to pray sincerely for saving faith, why may he not believe for salvation at once? It seems contradictory that he should not. This is the objection of a man who may know the theory of the gospel, but who is unacquainted with his own heart. The gospel is a very simple thing, but the heart is deceitful above all things; and therefore the application even of the most obvious truths of the gospel to such a heart, is the most difficult thing in the universe. The unrenewed heart exhibits a host of contradictions, and practises a multitude of deceptions upon itself; and did not

the power of God apply the gospel, the wisest and most honest of men would deceive themselves to their own destruction. It is true that when a man first hears the gospel, the way is completely cleared, and there is no reason, on the part of God, why he should not as readily exercise saving faith then as at any future period. The obstacle is in himself, and is his sin, in as much as it is the consequence of his depravity. It is also true that if he distinctly apprehend the facts of the gospel, and on sufficient evidence believe their truth, so far as knowledge is concerned, there is no reason why he should not have saving faith; for he will never obtain any other *mere belief*, different from this. But faith is not the mere assent to the general truths of the gospel: it is an act of the will also, as has been shown, acquiescing in those truths, and receiving and deriving something to one's self, in consequence of the things which are believed. Now when believing the general truths of the gospel, there is a mighty difference between the desire to escape from sin from dread of its consequences, and the desire to be delivered from sin, as such, and to obtain righteousness. Nobody will doubt but a man may have the former desire, while he has no desire of the righteousness of Christ, and feels no want of it, and has no hatred of sin and no love of holiness. In this consists the vast difference between natural faith and the faith of the operation of the Spirit of God. The direct object of the natural man's faith is deliverance from punishment, and he is only constrained to submit to part with sin in order to obtain impunity: the direct and principal object of the faith of the regenerate man is deliverance from sin itself and perfect holiness. This is the leading and general distinction; but it must be recollected, that even the saint is not yet perfect, and his heart contains a sad mixture of contradictory motives.

Let then a man who is acting upon the natural faith which worketh by fear examine his heart, and he will soon discover how strong a propensity he has to self-righteousness, and how averse he is to the righteousness of Christ, con-

sidered apart from its consequences. To obtain salvation, he would become a pharisee and submit to all the rigours of the law ; he would become a monk, and endure all the hardships of the desert and the cave ; he would become a brahman, and suffer the horror of years of torture, rather than, renouncing his own desire and feeling of merit, trust for righteousness simply because the Redeemer is righteous. Here lies the peculiar work of the Spirit of God ; and every thing but this, I am persuaded, the natural conscience can effect. Without divine aid, he may soon obtain faith, even the full assurance of faith, which is by no means so difficult to obtain as some imagine—the foolish virgins had it in a very high degree ; but it will not be the faith which trusts principally for righteousness, and which consequently worketh by love. It will be the faith of the antinomian or pharisee ; or rather, for both these spring from the same root, the faith of a carnal heart deceiving itself by the fancy of the *safeness* of its state. There is one most delusive form which this faith assumes which, in the present times, particularly deserves notice. The professed legalist, contemplating his convictions of sin, his legal repentance, his reformation, his good works, his knowledge, his prayers, feels whole and needs not a physician : the false believer, of whom I now speak, trusts that his sins are pardoned, and that he shall obtain everlasting life, not for his own works indeed, but he makes his believing of the doctrines of the gospel the ground of his confidence. His assenting to gospel truth becomes, in his mind, truly a work of law, and separates him as really from the atonement of Christ as were he a professed legalist, looking for justification by his observance of the Jewish ceremonial. He derives that moral satisfaction which appeases his conscience, not from the simple fact, that Christ died, but from the fact that he believes it. He finds the atonement of Christ an insufficient ground of his confidence, and feels that he requires to add something of his own, and in this case it is his own believing of general doctrine, to complete the foundation of his faith. The true believer looks for pardon

solely on account of Christ's death : the false believer trusts also for pardon, but on account of Christ's death and his own believing together. The faith of the former is the hand, as has been well said, by which he lays hold on Christ and receives directly from his hand all the blessings of salvation : the faith of the latter is both the hand which gives and receives, or rather, his believing general doctrine is the hand which gives, and his trusting to it for salvation is the hand which receives. Christ and his righteousness is the direct and only ground of true faith for salvation : our own assenting to the truth of the gospel is the direct and immediate ground of false faith. The source of peace and comfort to the one, is Christ dying for his sins : to the other, the source of comfort is his own assent to the general fact. To the true believer Christ crucified is a whole and only Saviour : the false believer makes use of Christ to render himself his own saviour. Both trust that their sins are pardoned, and both require to have a Saviour ; but to the one Christ is all in all and self is nothing ; to the other Christ holds the second place, self holds the first.

So far the natural man may proceed towards the kingdom of heaven. He may reach the full assurance of the *intellectual faith* which is so much extolled ; but it is a faith which worketh not by love. Such Christians may be orthodox, intelligent, clear-headed, but, like the Laodiceans, they are cold-hearted and luke-warm believers. The intelligent being has clear knowledge ; but the heart of the moral being is not at one with God. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life, divide the heart with the Redeemer.

Note F.

GROUND OF MORAL OBLIGATION.—Dr. Brown's view of the ground of moral obligation and the nature of virtue are far from being adequate ; but as he refers them to an original principle of our nature, and maintains the distinction of right and wrong, it were uncandid to charge

him with any design to subvert moral obligation. In his anxiety, however, to prove right and wrong mere relations, and to free us from a few unnecessary terms, he has certainly carried his peculiar views to an unwarrantable length. The following passage contains a striking exhibition of his principle. "That right and wrong signify nothing in objects themselves, is indeed most true. They are words expressive only of relation, and relations are not existing parts of objects, or things to be added to objects or taken from them. There is no right nor wrong, virtue nor vice, merit nor demerit, existing independently of the agents who are virtuous or vicious; and, in like manner, if there had been no moral emotions to arise on the contemplation of certain actions, there would have been no virtue, vice, merit, or demerit, which express only relations of those emotions. But though there be no right nor wrong in an agent, the virtuous agent is not the same as the vicious agent—I do not say merely to those whom he benefits or injures, but to the most remote individual who contemplates that intentional production of benefit or injury. All are affected, on the contemplation of these, with different emotions; and it is only by the difference of these moral emotions, that these actions are recognised as morally different. We feel that it will be impossible, while the constitution of nature remains as it is—and we may say even from the traces of the divine benevolence which the universe displays, impossible, while God himself, the framer of our constitution, and adapter of it to purposes of happiness, exists,—that the lover and intentional producer of misery, as misery, should ever be viewed with tender esteem; or that he whose only ambition has been to diffuse happiness more widely than it could have flowed without his aid, should be regarded with the detestation, on that account, which we now feel for the murderer of a single helpless individual, or for the oppressor of as many sufferers as a nation can contain in its whole wide orb of calamity; and a distinction which is to exist while God himself exists, or at least which has been, and as we cannot

but believe, will be, coeval with the race of man, cannot surely, be regarded as very precarious. It is not to moral distinctions only that this objection, if it have any force, would be applicable. Equality, proportion, it might be said, in like manner, signify nothing in the objects themselves to which they are applied, more than vice or virtue. They are as truly mere relations as the relations of morality. Though the three sides of a right angled triangle exist in the triangle itself, and constitute it what it is, *what we term the properties of such a triangle do not exist in it ; but are results of a peculiar capacity of a comparing mind.* It is man, or some thinking being like man, whose comparisons give birth to the very feeling that is termed by us a discovery of the equality of the squares of one of the sides to the squares of the other two ; that is to say—for the discovery of this truth is nothing more—it is man who, contemplating such a triangle, is impressed with this relation, and who feels afterwards that it would be impossible for him to contemplate it without such an impression. If this feeling never had arisen, and never were to arise in any mind, though the squares themselves might still exist as separate figures, *their equality would be nothing—exactly as justice and injustice would be nothing, where no relation of moral emotion had ever been felt ;* for equality, like justice, is a relation not a thing ; and if strictly analyzed, exists only, and can exist only, in the mind, which on the contemplation of certain objects, is impressed with certain feelings of relation ; in the same manner as right and wrong, virtue, vice, relate to emotions excited in some mind that has contemplated certain actions—without whose contemplation of the actions, it will be readily confessed, there could be no right nor wrong, virtue nor vice, as there could be no other relation without a mind that contemplates the objects said to be related. Certain geometrical figures cannot be contemplated by us without exciting certain feelings of the contemplating mind—which are notions of equality or proportion. *Is it necessary that the equality should be itself something existing in the sepa-*

*rate figures themselves, without reference to any mind that contemplates them, before he put any confidence in geometry? Or is it not enough that every mind which does contemplate them together, is impressed with that particular feeling, in consequence of which they are ranked as equal?" **

There are certainly some very extraordinary statements in this passage, and it may not be easy to give a satisfactory and consistent account of it. The cause of the strange misconception and more than scholastic mysticism which pervades it, seems to arise from having confounded our perception of properties and relations with the relations and properties themselves. With regard to our own perceptions of things, they depend, of course, upon the mind itself; but to confound the existence of those perceptions with the existence of the things perceived, is a relique of the school of Berkely and Hume, and a mistake unworthy of Dr. Brown. Let there exist a piece of matter of triangular shape, or let a globe, such as the planet on which we live, have rolled for millions of ages in the infinity of space, and Dr. Brown tells us that what we term properties of the triangle or globe, do not exist in it nor belong to it; *but are results of a peculiar capacity of the comparing mind.* Men even in supporting absurdity, are not altogether idiots, and have usually some sort of *sufficient reason* for what they profess to believe; and it might be a curious subject of speculation to ascertain by what specious sophism Dr. Brown was led to this conclusion. Properties are not distinct entities, but as properties belonging to substances, they as really subsist as the substances to which they belong. The same is true of relations which are still more shadowy. While two substances exist between which there subsists a certain relation, the relation as really subsists and is as permanent in its being as the substances themselves. How absurd to tell an astronomer that all the equalities and proportions of distance, magnitude, velocity, &c. which he discovers in the solar system, have derived all their existence from his own perception of them? If this be

not what Dr. Brown means to affirm ; but that his perception of these relations depends upon his comparing mind, this is a vulgar truth, and what is the meaning of all his pompous reasonings in obscuring and confounding a plain dictate of the common understanding? In all the relations and properties which are known to us, every body knows that the existence of these relations and properties depends on things which exist independently of us, and whether there were any mind or being to perceive them or not ; but that our perceptions depend, of course, upon the existence of our own mind, and that if there were no intelligent mind, though properties and relations between things might exist, they could not be the subjects of contemplation and knowledge. Why then talk of equality and proportion as nothing in objects to which they are said to belong? It is quite unmeaning. They are not separate entities, they are not essential attributes, and nobody thinks them so ; but they are real relations, which continue to subsist as relations, independently of all comparison and perception on the part of man. Though the whole race of men were swept from the earth, or indeed all intelligent beings from the universe, the diameter of the earth would not cease to bear a certain proportion to its circumference. It is totally absurd then to talk of perceiving the relations and properties of things, if there be not relations and properties actually subsisting to be perceived.

With regard to virtue and vice, if it is meant by Dr. Brown that there could be neither the one nor the other, were there no moral agents, that is, beings susceptible of certain feelings and capable of certain perceptions ; he is stating one of the most obvious and common truths, which the plainest peasant most fully understands. Virtue and vice are properties of moral agents, without whom they plainly cannot exist. If, however, it is meant to be affirmed that after moral agents really exist, there is no real difference in the desires and volitions, characterized by the opposite terms virtuous and vicious ; his statement is utterly false, and is refuted by the consciousness of every man whose understanding has not been

degraded by vice or blunted by the still more deadly influence of infidelity. There is a real difference in the moral quality of the desires and volitions of a moral agent, which is as permanent as his own existence. It depends not upon any perception of it, as Dr. Brown most falsely supposes, but is a distinction as real and permanent, and exists as truly, whether it is perceived or not, as the difference between the bulk of one planet and that of another. It is a distinction which not only has subsisted during the existence of the human race, and will subsist during the coming eternity of their existence, but since man, as an intelligent and moral being, resembles his Creator, has subsisted in the mind of the Deity during the whole eternity of the past. Long before a planet rolled among the solar rays, or a created being rejoiced in the goodness and equity of his glorious Creator, the great distinction of just and holy, as opposed to unjust and sinful, were essential attributes of the eternal Father of spirits. Why then talk so strangely and mystically of right and wrong, virtue and vice, as depending for their existence, on some vague, blind, unmeaning emotion, which might be removed, and with it the bug-bear distinction of right and wrong, without rendering man a being materially different from what he is? If Dr. Brown's principle be true, and if virtue and vice depend upon the presence of an *emotion*, as he imagines; let a man, by the habitual indulgence of crime, have this emotion removed in consequence of a seared conscience; and the degraded wretch is at once transformed into the man of virtue and worth. This is the true tendency of Dr. Brown's principle. On the perception of certain actions, an unmeaning emotion arises, not in consequence of any real difference of the actions, or any quality in the volitions of the agent; for the demerit of the volitions depend upon the emotion, and if this emotion did not arise, these same volitions would have been virtuous and praise-worthy. This is in truth to subvert the foundation of moral obligation; for it is a matter of fact that the feelings of conscience, as mere emotions, may be destroyed by a course of vice; and hence on Dr. Brown's

principle, all distinction of right and wrong is removed, and the feelings which were formerly vicious thus assume the opposite quality. Happily such philosophy is as repugnant to the common understanding of mankind, as it is hateful to their better feelings. It is true, that by habitual flagitiousness the degraded being ceases to *feel*, in the strict sense of the word, the merit or demerit of his actions; but mankind do not conceive that he is, on that account, acquitted from blame, nor does he himself cease to *know* that he is guilty. His seared conscience experiences no emotion at the perpetration of the most horrid crimes; but he still retains the knowledge of the moral difference of the volitions and actions of a moral agent. The virtue and vice of the agent remains; for they are the real qualities of his desires and volitions, and he has lost only the susceptibility of the moral emotions, not the power of perceiving the qualities of volitions as right or as wrong.

Dr. Brown's attempt to refute the opinion of Drs. Reid, Price, and others on this subject, is feeble and unsatisfactory. "The reference which Dr. Price would make of our moral sentiments to reason," says he, "would leave the difficulty and the doubt exactly where they were before; since reason is but a principle of our mental frame, like the principle which is the source of moral emotion, and has no peculiar claim to remain unaltered in the supposed general alteration of our mental constitution." This is a mistake. When the understanding is destroyed or wanting, as in the case of idiocy, there is no moral obligation; and hence the individual is free from guilt, though his moral feelings still retain their own distinctive nature. But besides, taking the understanding as capable of moral perception, and hence as the source of moral obligation, we have an agent capable of perceiving the real differences in his desires and affections, and consequently of knowingly and wisely regulating his volitions. This perception of right and wrong remains after the emotion may have been destroyed, and upholds the sacred distinction of vice and virtue. Admitting this

intellectual perception, combined with its appropriate feeling, all is plain and intelligible, and consistent with the well known phenomena. The perception of right and wrong is then put upon the same footing as the other perceptions of the understanding; and notwithstanding all the fluctuation of feeling and emotion, the foundation of moral obligation remains untouched, and can be removed only by the destruction of the understanding, which accordingly is allowed, both by the common sense of men and the authority of Scriptures, completely to remove it.

Note G.

PREDESTINATION.—"God from all eternity," says the Westminster Confession, "did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; *yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away but rather established.*"*

This is the true and an admirably correct account of two matters of facts. Man is free is the one; for it is every where supposed in Scripture, and is proved by experience: God, in a way consistent with this fact, has foreordained all things is the other, which is also established by the testimony of the Scriptures of truth. These are the facts; explain them as we may. The truly enlightened compilers of our Confession found no hesitation to state them; for they well knew that all things were ordained *by the most wise and holy counsel of God*, and must needs therefore all be right. Where is the well-informed Christian who can indulge the slightest suspicion that his Heavenly Father has done wrong, or feel the most transient wish that his arrangements were altered? If things are sometimes obscure and perplexing, it is his ignorance, he knows, which is the cause,

* Chap. III. *Contingency* plainly is to be taken as synonymous with *liberty*.

not any thing wrong on the part of God ; and if he saw the whole, he would be the first to join with the enlightened spirits above ; just and true are all thy ways, thou king of saints ! That his anticipation, though it be the conclusion of love, is not too partial, will appear by the slightest consideration of the doctrine of predestination.

From the cursory view which has been taken of free will, it has appeared that so far from the most absolute fore-knowledge being in the least inconsistent with the most perfect freedom, there can be no freedom without it. Freedom is not a state of non-entity, but the exercise of power ; and power implies the certainty that the agent who enjoys it will infallibly carry his purposes and views into effect. If the idea of contingency is once admitted, the immediate conclusion is, that the agent has not power to execute his will. So completely, as has been hinted, is this the judgment of the unsophisticated understanding of mankind, that every man knows well that, when he contemplates a design or forms a purpose, the more absolutely certain and infallible is the result, the greater, he feels, is the magnitude of his power and the extent of his freedom. And in like manner, when one human being considers the designs and purposes of another, the more certainty he discovers of their execution, and the more remote the period of time to which they are prospective, the higher is his admiration of the wisdom and power of the agent who can so extensively control and so infallibly determine the current of future events. To such an extent then can one man foresee the future certainty of the actions of another, without impairing his liberty ; and why should we deny the same power, in an infinitely higher degree, to Him whose understanding is infinite ? Let us next see the consistency of freedom with foreordination.

Were we to enter formally and at large into this subject, it would facilitate the inquiry to consider only the natural actions of men as coming under the decree of predestination ; and leave out those which are the result of extraordinary interpositions, on the part of God, as of the gift of the Holy

Spirit for the work of regeneration. And since such interpositions are acts of justice in punishing the guilty, or of mercy and love in saving the undone, there is cause surely, on account of them, only for gratitude, none for complaint. Still farther to simplify the inquiry, it might be desirable also to consider first the virtuous actions of men, and then those which are vicious.

With regard then to virtuous actions, as God has been the author of the human constitution, consisting of the intelligent mind and the moral susceptibilities, and has placed man in his present circumstances, it is plain that he has *directly* ordained all the virtuous actions of mankind. Knowing that a moral being uniformly acts on the principles of his constitution, by placing him in circumstances where he has a certain choice of right and wrong, proper and improper conduct, one man is able to render absolutely certain any series of the actions of another. The more he knows the disposition of the individual, to the greater extent is he able, in this way, to fix the certainty of his actions. Now, it is plain, that, had he also bestowed the mind which perceives the relations of the circumstances, and the susceptibilities which enable the man to act upon his perceptions, he would have been the real author of all the consequent actions. So it is then with the Creator. His creatures act because they will ; they will because they judge it right ; and they judge things right, because God has endowed them with a nature similar to his own. Thus, so long as they act upon the principles of the high being which God has given him, to Him they must render all the praise for the intelligent mind and generous soul, which at one time swells with gratitude at the recollection of his bounty ; at another, melts with compassion for the sufferings of the oppressed, and burns with indignation at the injustice of his oppressor.

With regard to vicious actions, the possession of the power of doing right necessarily implies, in the event of corruption, the ability of acting wrong. This follows necessarily from the fact that a being exists. The sun which now enlightens

and cheers the earth, if placed in an improper situation, would quickly consume it ; and in like manner, the moral agent who will not act right, must necessarily do wrong. The power which directed one way does right, when turned in an opposite direction, produces opposite effects. By endowing man with a moral nature, therefore, God has *indirectly* ordained all the evil which has been perpetrated ; but then this *indirect* ordination is of a totally different character from the *direct* ordination just mentioned. In the latter, man as yet did not exist, and the act of giving him existence, and placing him in the circumstances in which he was required to act, were wholly the effects of divine power ; but after man had obtained his constitution, he was no longer the subject of physical power, but became a responsible agent acting for himself. The conduct of God must then be judged on the moral principle of justice ; and the actions of man must be considered his own, for which he is responsible. If he has sinned, he and his seducer are the authors of the evil, and in rendering the works of God the means of evil, they are perverting their original design, and committing an injury against the Creator. They were able to do their duty, they well knew it, and in sinning they acted in opposition to the will of God. There was no ordination of evil on his part, and it were unnecessary ; for the constitution which He had created good, when corrupted, necessarily proved the cause of evil. This evil indeed God foresaw, and determined to take subsequent measures to overrule the wickedness of his creatures, in order to magnify his own glory, in the promotion of the welfare of his unfallen creation ; but all this, it has appeared, so far as our knowledge and means of information extends, is perfectly consistent both with the attributes of God, and the freedom and responsibility of man.

The whole doctrine of predestination, therefore, as it regards the natural actions of man, is reduced to the simple fact, that God created man a moral agent. By creating him a perfect moral agent, He, with the utmost certainty, determined all the good which man has performed ; and in so do-

ing, He could not but determine all the evil which, in the event of a fall, might ensue. There is no real difficulty in the subject of predestination, if we adhere to plain and known facts. If we know the nature of agency, we at once discover that the whole truth was involved in the fact, "man became a living soul." While such a being exists in a state of perfection, in given circumstances, his actions are all determined; if he become corrupted, their certainty remains the same. The confusion has arisen from ignorance of the nature of agency, and consequently by the introduction of a contingency which virtually denies the existence of man; for if a moral agent has *power*, there is no real contingency. If you once admit that a being possesses a moral constitution, and if by predestination is meant the part which God acts in bringing about the actions of men, the divine act of creation and the divine act of predestination mean precisely the same thing. If we speak with any meaning when we affirm that God foreordained the actions of men, we just state the vulgar truth, "God created man." Let a being be possessed of a moral nature and placed in certain circumstances, and his conduct is determined; for, in every case, he has the alternative of doing only right or wrong, and so long as he acts upon the principles of his constitution, he will infallibly choose the right. Admit the fact that man exists, and you cannot deny the doctrine of predestination as stated in our Confession. The idea that predestination implies any interference,—we omit extraordinary interpositions of judgment and mercy, which are all righteous and just—or any exertion of power, on the part of God, to bring about the action of his creatures, is a misconception arising from the ignorance of the nature of the human constitution. It is an awkward expedient to account for facts whose real cause is unknown—an attempt to hold together an incoherent system of theology, like the invention of a clumsy mechanic to preserve the unity of the planets of the solar system, which, by the appointment of the Creator, are already indissolubly connected by the principle of gravitation. When God created man with a moral con-

stitution, He secured the certainty of his future actions, and the supposition of any further exertion of power is completely unmeaning, inasmuch as it assigns, for the same effect, two causes, either of which is adequate to its production. It imagines God to do a second time that which, by his act of creation, He had already done.

It is here the dispute between the Calvinist and Arminian seems to hinge. If by predestination is meant the fact, that God, by creating man with certain perceptions and feelings, and by placing him in certain circumstances, foreordained directly or indirectly all his actions, no rational man can deny it; but if it is implied in this doctrine that God now exerts physical power to control the agency and bring to pass the actions of man, such a supposition has no sanction from the doctrines of Scripture, as stated in the Westminster Confession. This were to make God the author of sin, to offer violence to the will of man, and to destroy his liberty; and besides, it were to set one decree of God against another, and completely to derange the moral government which his wisdom has established. With regard to the actions of men, the physical act of predestination was the act of creation, and all that has place now is the foreknowledge of what was then determined, as the ground of future physical acts in punishing and rewarding men according to their works. The whole of predestination now proceeds upon foreknowledge, and nothing more is necessary. Hence the apostle expressly lays down the latter as the ground of the former, in speaking of God's dealings with men subsequent to creation. "Whom he did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."* Another apostle states the same principle, styling believers "elect according to the foreknowledge of God;"† and the whole Scriptures speak the same language.

So consistent then are the doctrines of the Westminster Confession with the freedom and the responsibility of man. So far from the foreordination which it teaches being hostile

* Rom. viii. 29.

† 1 Pet. 1, 2.

to liberty, it truly, as is justly stated, and most directly establishes it. The only possible freedom to a real agent is the enjoyment of power; and power implies the certainty of the resulting actions. Deny predestination, and you at the same time deny the existence of man, as the defenders of contingency virtually do. But let man really exist and possess intellectual and moral power, and by this power his actions, in given circumstances, are determined. The doctrine of the Divine decrees, which learned ignorance has so grievously perverted to cast stumbling-blocks before the people of God, is, with reference to the actions of men, nothing but the great truth, that God decreed to create man, and ordained that he should be powerful and free. This is the whole truth. God decreed to give man a being, and by the same decree his will is preserved from violence, and his liberty secured. The whole of predestination which now concerns man is simply this; let man act as he chooses, and choose as he judges right. This is the most absolute freedom; and in enjoying it to the full, he is just bringing to pass what the wise and holy counsel of God had from eternity ordained.

Such then is the whole of predestination which respects the natural actions of men. It is just what Scripture supposes, and reason would infer it to be, nothing but the fact, that man has been created a moral being, the subject of a moral government, possessed of power to regulate his conduct, and who is therefore left at perfect liberty to act for himself, and stand or fall on his own responsibility; or in the words of the Confession, "Man had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well pleasing to God; but was neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined to good or evil."* To such a being a fall was his own act, for which he must justly suffer the consequences; and now that he has fallen, he "hath wholly lost all ability of will to any *spiritual good accompanying salva-*

* Chap. ix.

tion; so as a natural man, being altogether averse to that good, and dead in sin, *is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.*" Hence the doctrine of predestination with respect to the actions of men, in consequence of the communication of divine power, is totally different from that which we have just examined, as it always implies the immediate agency of the Divine Spirit. But on this part of the subject it is here unnecessary to enter. The whole of it is contained in these words of the apostle; "It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." And if predestination with reference to men's natural actions, is understood as being, what it really is, simply the fact of creation, the second creation will be found to arise out of the ruins of the first, with a regularity, a beauty, and a glory, which the first, very good though it was, could never have exhibited.

Note H.

MEANS OF GRACE.—Dr. Whitby quotes from Le Blanc some doctrines which were held both by the Calvinistic and Lutheran reformers, which he treats with great contempt as utterly absurd and repugnant to reason and Scripture: such as, "There be some moral precepts which man in this lapsed state cannot do at all; some actions which are materially good are yet formally sins; man, in the state of lapsed nature, is not free to choose what is morally good," &c. These doctrines have been sometimes misexplained and abused, but every one acquainted with the Bible or with human nature, clearly perceives that they contain most important truth, and involve none of the contradictions which Dr. Whitby fancies he discovers. They are indeed all truths which, if a man do not clearly apprehend and thoroughly believe, he will never appreciate the nature of the gospel, or to any great extent, if at all, experience its saving effects. Let us briefly see the consistency and beneficial tendency of the most obnoxious of them.

It is, in the first place, most decidedly held, not only that man is utterly unable to perform many duties, which the law of God commands, but that all the means of grace, however honestly employed, are in themselves altogether inefficient to accomplish the desired end. But surely nobody who is not in jest, or totally ignorant of the subject, can ridicule this idea. Moses smiting the rock was not the cause of the flowing of the waters; the view of the brazen serpent had no physical power to heal the wounded Israelites; the blast of the rams' horns had no mechanical force sufficient to overturn the walls of Jericho; the prayer of an apostle possessed no charm in raising the dead. The very use of such means as prayer necessarily implies, that it and all the other means, are in themselves ineffectual. It has indeed, like all other means, a certain adaptation to the end, and exerts a moral influence upon the minds of those who employ it; but if the man who seeks, by prayer, the gift of the Spirit of God, believe that the moral influence of prayer will secure the object of his desire, he has yet to learn the nature and end of prayer; and till he obtain this information, vain will be all his petitions, and his heart will remain unchanged. The cause of the efficiency of prayer, and of all the other means of grace, is the almighty power and unchangeable faithfulness of God. It is here that he who rationally employs them rests all his hopes; and the more he is sensible of their inherent inefficiency, the more honestly he will employ them, and the more he is certain that he does not beat the air, but that they shall prove mighty through God, to secure to him the object he has in view.

It is true also, that those who hold this doctrine believe; that all works which proceed not from a heart, purified by faith and regenerated by the power of the Holy Ghost, cannot please God, or entitle a man to the grace which he needs, but are rather to be considered as possessing the nature of sin. This doctrine, besides being that of the sacred Scriptures, is founded directly upon the constitution of a moral being, and is every day illustrated and approved in the conduct of men. One virtuous act of a moral being cannot jus-

tify any criminal part of his conduct, or free him from the guilt of any sin. The subject who rebels against his rightful sovereign, and resists the righteous laws of his country, is not acquitted of high treason, because he is faithful to his associates, affectionate to his friends, condescending and beneficent to his dependents. So far he acts rightly, and is obeying the laws of God and of man ; but so long as he remains in arms against his country, he is still committing the crime of treason, even while he is discharging many duties and yielding partial obedience to the laws. So it is with fallen man in relation to God. He owes a number of duties to himself and to mankind as well as to his Creator, and possesses a variety of active principles, which enable him to discharge them. Acting on some of those principles, he may often be conscious of motives which the law of God approves, and perform actions which it enjoins ; and this part of his conduct therefore, abstractly considered, is right, and sanctioned, both in matter and motive, by the divine law, and is no doubt pleasing to God as a holy moral being. But while he is thus to a certain extent acting right, he is neglecting many of the most important duties which God commands, and like the rebel just supposed, he still remains an enemy to God ; and his conduct therefore, as a whole, must be considered sinful, and himself unacceptable to the pure eye of Him who trieth the heart and who cannot look upon iniquity. The principle which the apostle lays down, if not true, as is sometimes erroneously supposed, with respect to the commandments of the law literally, is strictly true with regard to the moral being's relation to that law : He who is guilty in one point is guilty in all. Though he fulfil some parts of the law, if he violate it in others, his whole conduct, as that of a moral agent, is sinful, and his partial obedience can never atone for his crimes, or render him and his conduct pleasing to God. Till rendered acceptable by faith in the Beloved, he remains, notwithstanding all his virtue, real virtue, it may be, his punctual discharge of many duties, and his indulgence of

many generous and virtuous feeling, an enemy to his Creator and obnoxious to the punishment denounced by his law.

How then, Dr. Whitby would demand, can a man rightly employ the means of grace, if all his conduct is sinful? In his very prayers, he must commit sin, according to this view of the matter. In the use of all means, he must merit only a curse and not a blessing. So he does we reply. The conduct of a fallen creature is at all times sinful, and in itself offensive to God. The only cause of the acceptance of fallen man is the merit of the divine atonement. Were not God now in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not *imputing their trespasses to them*, the prayers and works even of the most eminent saint would bring upon him swift destruction. God is not imputing *their sins unto the world*, but, for Christ's sake, waiting to be gracious, and hence He is able to hear the prayer of fallen men. For his own name's sake, and on the ground of the merit of the Redeemer, altogether independently of human worth, He suits the means of grace to the present condition of mankind, and pledges himself to bestow the blessing on those who employ them. Without any holiness of heart, and without any meritorious motives, men are invited to act upon such feelings as they naturally possess, and come without money and without price to obtain, from the fulness of Christ, pardon of sin and sanctification of soul. The grace which they need is bestowed, not as a reward of their own merit, but as a gift purchased for them by the blood of the Redeemer.

Hence then, while we hold decidedly that "man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation," * either by any inherent efficacy in the means themselves, or any merit he has in using them; it must be admitted, that the means are adapted to his present moral condition, and that he is perfectly able to employ them. The man who has heard the gospel, and refuses to make himself farther acquainted with

* Confess. Chap. IX.



APPENDIX.

its doctrines, and to seek, by prayer, the power which is truly and faithfully offered him, has no promise of any blessing from God; but if he do make use of the appointed means, with those motives, and with that sincerity of which the natural and unregenerate man is capable, he shall assuredly obtain the grace which he seeks, and which the veracity of God, who cannot lie, has engaged to bestow. His salvation is thus put into his own hands as truly as the multitude of the transactions of ordinary life; and if he perish, his blood is upon his own head. The great principle on which the application of redemption is conducted, is never forgotten: "According to thy faith be it done unto thee." As Christians are rewarded, as it is well said, not for their works, as the ground of merit, but according to their works as the measure: so the unregenerate man is redeemed, not by his works as the cause of his acceptance, but by his works as the means. The predestination and election of the enlightened Calvinist, is not the creation of a deranged imagination, as has been falsely alleged, but is a matter of fact which does no violence to the will of the creature, nor destroys the liberty of secondary causes, but rather, nay, most undoubtedly and inevitably, establishes them. As God is acknowledged to work by secondary causes in the providential government of the world, so He does in the economy of grace. It is by the agency of his creatures, free and unfettered by any act of his, that He carries into effect the decree of election. They have indeed been enslaved by their own crimes, and are utterly unable to save or rescue themselves; but God, infinite in mercy and wisdom, has introduced a new dispensation suited to their present condition, and has appointed means of grace which they are perfectly able to employ; and as they employ them, or employ them not, shall they be saved or shall they be condemned.

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